National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Bend National Park
PO Box 129
Big Bend National Park, TX 79834
http://www.nps.gov/bibe/

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# Chisos Mountains

## Backcountry Campsites

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Big Bend National Park
PO Box 129
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Texas

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***Inside cover*: Along the Pinnacles Trail**

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Chisos Mountains Backcountry Campsites

# Big Bend's Backcountry

*Undeniably, the young and vigorous, or even the older and vigorous, are the lucky people in any of our national parks, for they can hike, pack, and climb to the choice hidden places where roadways are out of the question.*

*-Freeman Tilden, 1945*

## What is the Backcountry?

While the resources of Big Bend National Park have a broad appeal for all types of visitors, in many important respects this is a backcountry park. Big Bend is largely undeveloped, with paved roads providing access to three developed areas; the vast majority of the park is seen only from a distance by the vast majority of visitors. The undeveloped portions of the park constitute our "backcountry." When one thinks of terms like "backcountry" or "wilderness," images of rugged landscapes and rigorous hiking often come to mind. Backcountry use in Big Bend National Park is this but much more as well.

## Types of Backcountry Use

### Hiking/Backpacking

Big Bend National park is a hiker's paradise containing the largest expanse of roadless public lands in Texas. More than 201 miles of trails offer opportunities for day hikes or backpacking trips. For more experienced hikers, the lure of the desert can be answered by hiking and camping off-trail.

### High Chisos Designated sites

Backpackers in the Chisos Mountains can choose from a number of designated backcountry sites along the trails of the High Chisos. You choose a specific site for each night. All High Chisos sites have food storage lockers. It is crucial that all backpackers in the Chisos adhere to the "Food Storage in Bear Country" Rules. The designated campsites in the High Chisos are the focus of this booklet.

### Open Zone Camping

Open zone camping permits are available for backpackers who wish to camp outside of the Chisos Mountains. The park is divided into a number of zones ranging from areas along popular trails to extremely isolated areas. Zone camping requires that you:

- camp at least 1/2 mile from and out of sight of any road (including unpaved roads)
- camp at least 100 yards from any trail, historic structure, archeological site, dry wash or cliff edge.
- camp at least 1/4 mile away from any water source.

### Backcountry Roads

For those who wish to camp in the backcountry without having to backpack, Big Bend offers a number of primitive campsites along backcountry roads. Most sites are located in the desert and along the River Road, there are no primitive roadside campsites in the Chisos Mountains. While some sites are accessible to most vehicles, a high clearance and/or four wheel drive vehicle is necessary to reach others. Other than a nice view and a flat gravel space, these sites offer NO amenities.

### Horse/Stock Use

For visitors with horses, Big Bend offers a complex riding experience. Trails allow horse access to the South Rim of the Chisos Mountains, and in the open desert you can travel cross-country to explore the region as Comanches and ranchers once did.

### River Use

Imagine drifting down the Rio Grande through sheer walls of limestone, with the occasional sound of your paddle dipping in the water and the song of a canyon wren as your only acoustic accompaniments. A river trip through one of Big Bend National Park's spectacular canyons can offer you this type of wilderness escape.

### The fine print

*All overnight backcountry use requires a backcountry use permit.* Certain types of day-use (horses/stock or river use) also require a free backcountry permit.

***Preceding page*: Fall colors along the Boot Canyon Trail.**

## Leave No Trace

Be a steward of the land; during your visit to Big Bend, do everything you can to minimize your impact on the desert landscape.

**Plan ahead and prepare**

Big Bend is a land of extremes. Plan on high desert temperatures in the summer with little to no shade; in the winter freezing temperatures are possible in the Chisos Mountains. Schedule your visit to avoid peak season. Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6. Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

**Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces**

Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, and gravel. Protect riparian areas by camping at least 100 yards from springs, creek beds, and tinajas. Good campsites are found, not made. While on the trail, walk in single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy. Keep campsites small. Focus on areas where vegetation is absent.

**Dispose of Waste Properly**

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Deposit solid human waste in cat-holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 1/4 mile from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished. Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

**Leave What You Find**

Preserve the past. Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, wildflowers and other natural objects as you find them. Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species. Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

**Minimize Campfire Impacts**

*Campfires are not allowed in Big Bend National Park*. In order to cook foods you may use a backpacking stove, portable fuel stove or the barbeque grills in your campsite.

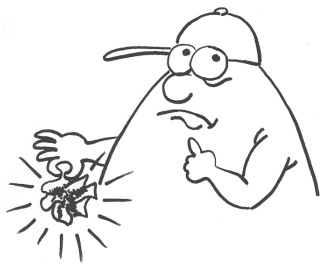
**Respect Wildlife**

Observe Big Bend's wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Never feed wild animals. Feeding wild animals damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers. Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely. Pets are not allowed in the backcountry or on trails. Pets should be on leash and under supervision at all times.

**Be Considerate of Other Visitors**

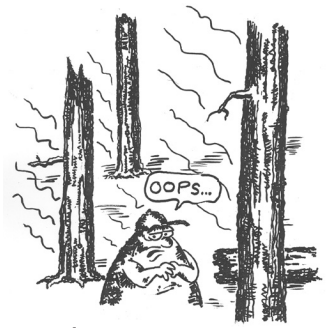
Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail. Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock. Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors. Let nature's sound prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

## *The Toilet Paper Dilemma*



What to do with used toilet paper?

Bury it?




Burn it?

I know—I'll carry it out in a plastic bag!

## Backcountry Regulations

You are responsible for protecting the resources of your park; these regulations are enforced.

**Groundfires and woodfires are prohibited.**
Use only gas stoves or charcoal within a BBQ grill. Pack out all evidence of use. Note: charcoal fires are only allowed at backcountry roadside campsites and not allowed in the High Chisos or zone camping areas.

**Pack out all litter.**
Help preserve the park's natural beauty by packing out all litter, including cigarette butts and toilet paper.

**No pets on trails or in the backcountry.**
Pets may harm or be harmed by wildlife, and can attract predators.

**Do not cut switchbacks on trails.**
Although cross-country hiking is allowed, help prevent trail erosion by staying on marked trails.

**Collecting any natural or historical feature or object is prohibited.**
Leave park features intact for others to enjoy.

**Contaminating natural water sources and their surroundings is prohibited. Camp at least 100 yards from any water source.**
Desert water sources and springs are fragile and vital for the plants and animals that depend on them for survival. Soaps, oils, skin lotions, and food residues from bathing and washing can seriously impact water quality. Minimize your impact to areas surrounding springs, seeps, and other temporal water sources.

**Camp within designated sites.**
When camping in a designated site prevent resource damage by camping within the area outlined by rocks, logs, or brush.

**Generator use is not permitted in backcountry campsites.**
Natural quiet is a protected resource; help preserve a quiet wilderness experience.

**In open zones, camp at least 1/2 mile and out of sight from any road and at least 100 yards from any trail, historical structure, archeological site, dry wash, or cliff edge.**
Minimize your impact to the natural landscape.

**Bury human waste at least six (6) incles deep. Pack out toilet paper.**
Human waste is unsightly and unsanitary. Carry a digging trowel. Locate latrines 1/4 mile from any water source and well away from camp.

**Possession of firearms, other weapons, and traps is prohibited.**

**Motorized vehicles and bicycles are permitted only on designated public roads.**
Off-road vehicle travel causes visual and environmental damage.

**Do not feed wildlife.**
Feeding wildlife is illegal; it often results in having to destroy the animal. Keep food in a hard-sided vehicle or food storage locker where provided.

**Hikers along the Boot Canyon Trail.**

CHERYL GREINER

*One thirty P.M.: Rather late in the day to be starting a fourteen-mile hike but I have no choice. Jack must start back to Santa Fe tomorrow—a seven-hundred-mile drive—and therefore I must hike the South Rim Trail today. Why? Because I want to; it's now or maybe never.*

*-Edward Abbey*

## Planning Your Trip

**What should I expect?**

The South Rim is an all day or overnight trip. At 14 miles in length, give yourself at least eight hours to complete it. You can make it a loop or take the same trail up and back. If you're making a loop, ascend the Laguna Meadow Trail in the morning then hike to the south rim and back along the Boot Canyon Trail leading to a descent on the Pinnacles. Laguna Meadow is very open to the afternoon sun and can be warm. Either trail will take you through a dry oak forest filled with junipers, pinon pine, oaks and maples. This forest provides excellent bird-watching opportunities with a chance to see the Colima warbler, the endangered black-capped vireo, the racous Mexican jay, and numerous other song-birds. The Boot Canyon trail will take you along the edge of a slickrock canyon at times filled with running water. It will also give you a chance to see the well-known "boot" formation. The South Rim is an area where the trees meet the grassland. Here there are numerous sightings of Carmen Mountain white-tailed deer, and sometimes black bear

**What will I need?**

As far as just the basics go, you will need water (one gallon per person per day), sturdy shoes, food, a trail map, sunscreen, and a hat. Don't forget your camera and binoculars.

**Is it worth the climb?**

That can only be answered by the individual. If it is scenery, solitude, or serenity one seeks, the Chisos will deliver. Over 15 miles of mountain trails offer excellent views of the Chisos, desert panoramas, the Rio Grande, and far into Mexico. The only sounds you will hear are the birds, wind and the crunch of gravel under your boot. As far as a chance for solitude, there is plenty for all. However, if it is a black bear or mountain lion you seek, don't expect to see one. Wildlife is unpredictable. If you happen to cross paths, consider yourself very lucky.

So whether you're hiking to the South Rim, Emory Peak, or to the nearest Colima warbler, the Chisos Mountains will offer you a great way to enjoy Big Bend at its highest.

**No Fires/No Smoking**

Campfires are prohibited. Use only gas/propane backpacker stoves. Smoking is prohibited along all trails and at all campsites in the High Chisos.

**Seasonal Closures**

To protect the peregrine falcon, an endangered species, the following areas of the park are closed to all use from February 1 until May 31 each year:

- The Southeast Rim Trail and a portion of the Northeast Rim Trail from the Boot Canyon/Southeast Rim junction to a point just north of Campsite NE-4.
- All Southeast Rim campsites as well as Northeast (NE) campsites 4 and 5 are closed during this period. Technical rock climbing on rock faces within ¼ mile of known peregrine eyries, as posted, will not be allowed between February 1 and May 31.

**Large Groups**

Bringing large groups into the backcountry can pose many challenges, as the chance for negative impacts on the resources of Big Bend increases with the number of people using them. No overnight backcountry camping group or party can be larger than 15 person. In open-zone areas groups larger than 15 must camp in non-adjacent zones (separated by paved or unpaved roads).

In the High Chisos area, a number of designated campsites can accommodate groups, though it may be necessary to split into a number of nearby sites. As advance reservations for permits are not possible, it is best to plan ahead and have a number of alternative sites if your first choice is not available.

**Bear and Mountain Lion Sightings**

If you encounter a bear or mountain lion:

- Do not run (you may resemble prey).
- Watch children closely and never let them run ahead or lag behind.
- Try to look large. Wave your arms. Throw rocks or sticks at it.
- If attacked, fi ght back.
- Report any bear or mountain lion sightings or encounters to a park ranger as soon as possible.

## Getting a Backcountry Permit

A permit is required for all river use, horse use, and overnight backcountry camping, and can be obtained in person only, up to 24 hours in advance of the trip. Permits can can be written for as many as fourteen (14) consecutive nights in the backcountry. Park staff can assist you with trip planning based on your needs and current trail conditions. Permits can be obtained at all visitor centers during normal operating hours.

### Overnight Use Fee

A $10-per permit fee is required for all overnight backcountry use permits, including multi-day river trips, and overnight backcountry camping. This fee is payable when the permit is issued, and all funds collected go to projects to improve or protect the backcountry experience, including hardening/improving river access points, backcountry campsite maintenance, and trail maintenance.

### Plan Ahead

Detailed information on backcountry campsites in the Chisos Mountains and along the backcountry roads are available on the park's website at www.nps.gov/bibe

A wide variety of maps, books, hiking guides and river guides are available for purchase at park visitor centers. If you would like to order them in advance of your trip, call the Big Bend Natural History Association at 432 477-2236 or visit their online bookstore at www.bigbendbookstore.org

### Obtaining a Backcountry Permit

Backcountry permits must be obtained in person, and any changes must be also be made in person at any park visitor center.

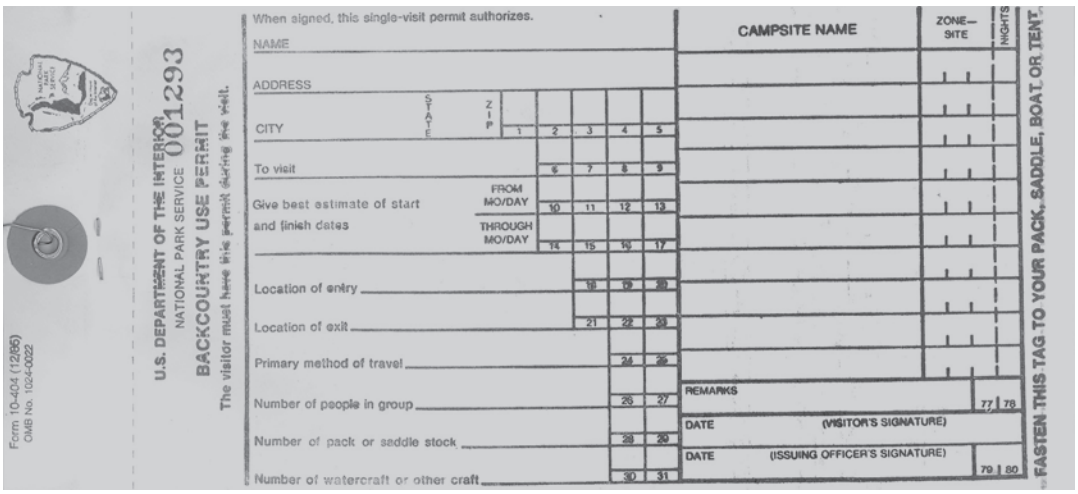
### Remember!

- You must have your vehicle license plate number to obtain a permit.
- Requests for permits or permit changes will not be taken over the phone.
- Permits may be obtained twenty-four hours in advance of your backcountry trip; advance reservations are not possible.
- Backcountry camping permits can only be issued during business hours at any visitor center; ***you cannot camp in a backcountry site*** if you do not arrive in time to obtain a permit.

### Camping Limits

Visitors cannot camp at backcountry campsites for more than 14 consecutive nights, or for more than 28 nights (including both frontcountry and backcountry camping) in a calendar year, or at any one site for more than 14 nights in a calendar year.

**Backcountry permits are required for all overnight use and some types of backcountry day use.**



# Hiking the High Chisos

Rising nearly a mile above the desert floor, the Chisos Mountains offer excellent year-round hiking experiences, whether you're looking for a short day hike or an overnight experience.

## Chisos Mountains Trail System

The *Pinnacles Trail* gains 1,700' (518m) in 3.5 miles from the Chisos Basin trailhead. This is the most direct route to Emory Peak and Boot Canyon.

The *Laguna Meadow Trail* climbs from the Chisos Basin to the meadow namesake of the trail with a elevation gain of 1,600' (488m) in 3.3 miles (5.3km).

The *Emory Peak Trail* is a two-mile roundtrip trail that leads to the summit of the tallest point of the Chisos Mountains. This trail begins near the top of the Pinnacles Trail. The last portion of the hike requires a rock scramble that may not be for everyone; use caution.

The *Boot Canyon Trail* leads from the Pinnacles Pass to the South Rim, passing through the lushest environment in the Chisos Mountains. Depending on annual rainfall, water may be present in pools along the canyon during parts of the year.

The *Colima Trail* is a one mile trail that connects the Pinnacles/Boot Canyon Trails to the Laguna Meadow Trail to form a ten mile loop hike.

The *Southeast/Northeast Rim Trail* is a 3.3 mile trail that loops from the South Rim around to the middle portion of the Boot Canyon Trail. Stunning views to the south, southeast and southwest can be found here. Most of this trail is closed seasonally to protect nesting peregrine falcons.

The *Southwest Rim Trail* connects the Boot Canyon Trail to the Laguna Meadow Trail in 1.7 miles. This is the most common route visitors hike to view the South Rim.

### Trails to the desert

Two trails exit the Chisos Mountains for the desert below. The *Juniper Canyon Trail* descends 6.2 miles one-way to the end of the Juniper Canyon Road. The *Blue Creek Canyon Trail* descends 5.5 miles from Laguna Meadow to the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive. These two trails can be connected via the Dodson Trail to form the 30-mile Outer Mountain Loop hike.

### Designated Campsites

There are 42 designated backpacking campsites along the trail system in the High Chisos Mountains.

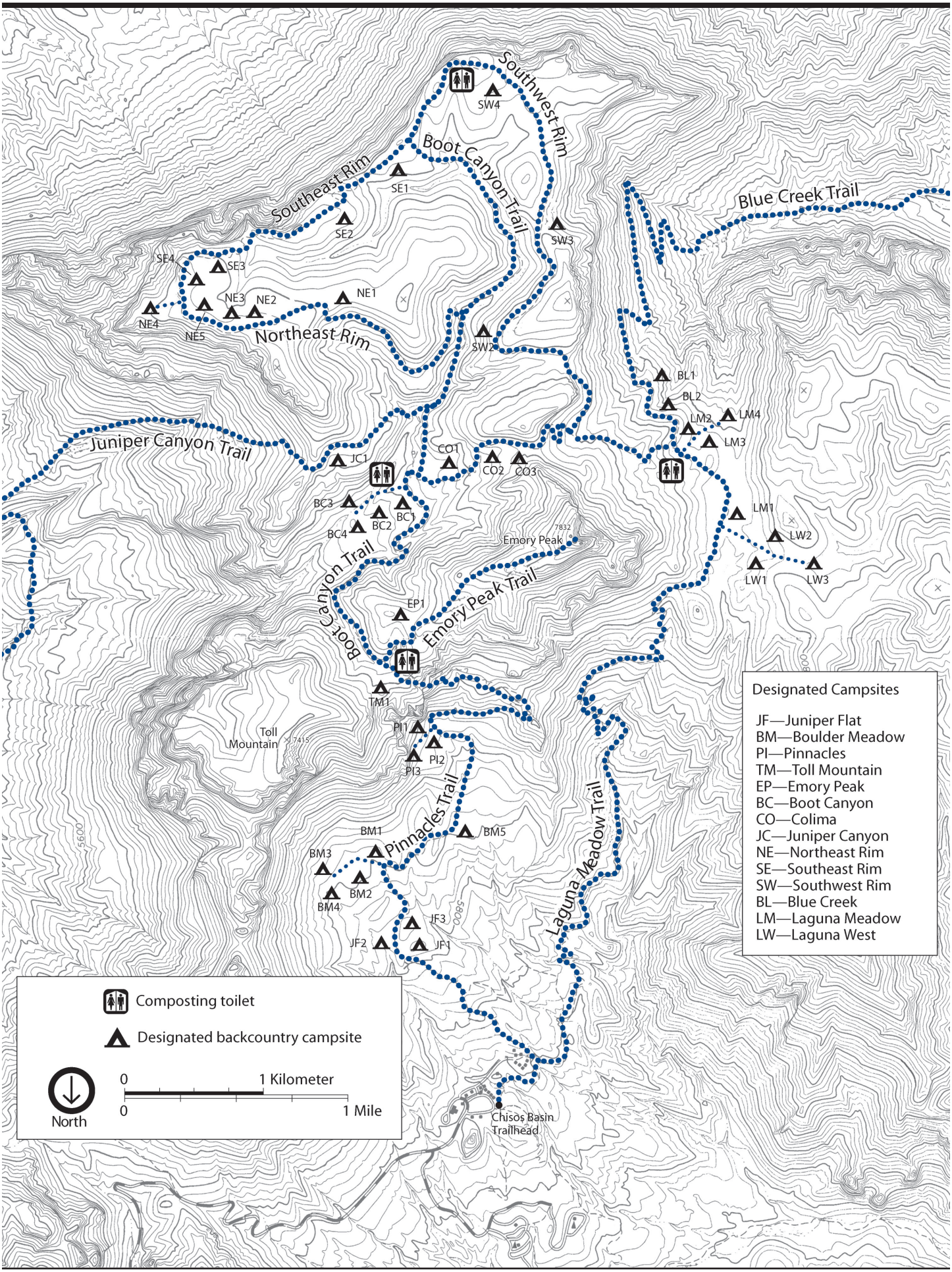
**High Chisos Campsites**

| Campsite | Code | Group Size |
|---|---|---|
| **Juniper Flat** | JF-1 | 4/1 |
| *(3 sites)* | JF-2 | 6/3 |
| | JF-3 | 6/3 |
| **Boulder Meadow** | BM-1 | 4/2 |
| *(5 sites)* | BM-2 | 4/2 |
| | BM-3 | 4/2 |
| | BM-4 | 4/2 |
| | BM-5 | 6/2 |
| **Pinnacles** | PI-1 | 4/1 |
| *(3 sites)* | PI-2 | 6/2 |
| | PI-3 | 15/5 |
| **Toll Mountain** | TM-1 | 4/1 |
| **Emory Peak** | EP-1 | 6/2 |
| **Boot Canyon** | BC-1 | 6/2 |
| *(4 sites)* | BC-2 | 12/5 |
| | BC-3 | 4/2 |
| | BC-4 | 6/2 |
| **Colima** | CO-1 | 15/5 |
| *(3 Sites)* | CO-2 | 3/1 |
| | CO-3 | 4/2 |
| **Juniper Canyon** | JC-1 | 6/2 |

| Campsite | Code | Group Size |
|---|---|---|
| **Northeast Rim** | NE-1 | 5/2 |
| *(5 sites)* | NE-2 | 6/2 |
| | NE-3 | 6/2 |
| | NE-4 | 10/5• |
| | NE-5 | 6/2• |
| **Southeast Rim** | SE-1 | 6/2• |
| *(4 sites)* | SE-2 | 6/2• |
| | SE-3 | 10/5• |
| | SE-4 | 6/2• |
| **Southwest Rim** | SW-2 | 3/1 |
| *(3 sites)* | SW-3 | 10/4 |
| | SW-4 | 4/1 |
| **Blue Creek** | BL-1 | 4/1 |
| *(2 sites)* | BL-2 | 4/1 |
| **Laguna Meadow** | LM-1 | 6/2 |
| *(4 sites)* | LM-2 | 10/5 |
| | LM-3 | 6/2 |
| | LM-4 | 6/2 |
| **Laguna West** | LW-1 | 4/2 |
| *(3 sites)* | LW-2 | 4/1 |
| | LW-3 | 4/1 |

Group Size shows maximum capacity for number of persons / number of tents

•-denotes a campsite closed Feb. 1 - May 31


Southwest Rim
Boot Canyon Trail
Southeast Rim
Blue Creek Trail
Northeast Rim
Juniper Canyon Trail
Boot Canyon Trail
Emory Peak Trail
Pinnacles Trail
Laguna Meadow Trail
SW4
SE1
SE2
SW3
SE4
SE3
NE3
NE2
NE1
NE4
NE5
SW2
BL1
BL2
LM2
LM4
LM3
JC1
CO1
CO2
CO3
BC3
BC1
BC2
BC4
Emory Peak
7832
LM1
LW2
LW1
LW3
EP1
TM1
PI1
PI2
PI3
Toll Mountain
7415
BM1
BM5
BM3
BM2
BM4
JF3
JF2
JF1
5600
Chisos Basin Trailhead
Designated Campsites
JF—Juniper Flat
BM—Boulder Meadow
PI—Pinnacles
TM—Toll Mountain
EP—Emory Peak
BC—Boot Canyon
CO—Colima
JC—Juniper Canyon
NE—Northeast Rim
SE—Southeast Rim
SW—Southwest Rim
BL—Blue Creek
LM—Laguna Meadow
LW—Laguna West
Composting toilet
Designated backcountry campsite
North
0
1 Kilometer
0
1 Mile

## Designated Campsites

There are 42 designated backpacking campsites in the High Chisos Mountains along the trail system to the South Rim.

All campsites are accessible only by foot. You must be prepared and equipped to backpack. Distances vary from one to eight miles each way.

**Balancing use and preservation**

Since the park's establishment in 1944, hikers and backpackers have found peace, solitude, and beauty in the High Chisos. Although the park contains over one hundred miles of maintained trails, the High Chisos routes, covering fewer than twenty miles, receive more than 80% of total trail usage. During busy seasons, when all camping areas in the Chisos are full, there can be as many as 200 campers per night adjacent to these trails.

For forty years, visitors to the High Chisos were allowed to camp wherever they wished, outside a 200 foot corridor on each side of a trail. When usage was low, compaction and denuding of camp areas was not great, and natural processes provided revegetation. By the mid-1980s, increases in visitation and use in the High Chisos led to obvious negative impact of park resources. In many places barren areas existed, often directly adjacent to the trail. In 1985 the park developed the existing system of designated campsites, establishing campsites in historically desirable locations, allowing for maximum privacy and benefit from the surrounding natural beauty.

For over twenty years, this method of preserving valuable resources has ensured the existence of largely unspoiled natural area for all generations that the future will bring to this unique island in the desert. Please camp only within the boundaries of the designated campsites!

## Composting Toilets

Composting toilets are found at four locations along the High Chisos trail system: Pinnacles Pass, Boot Canyon, the Southwest Rim and Laguna Meadow. These toilets are located at strategic points along the trail to prevent spread of disease, bacteriological contamination, and aesthetic degradation.

It's a good idea to hike with a trowel, toilet paper, and resealable plastic bags, just in case.

**Proper care and feeding of a composting toilet**

In order to keep the composting toilets in perfect working order, a few easy steps must be followed:

- No garbage, cans, plastic, and etc. Trash negates the efficiency of the toilet and is extremely difficult to remove.
- Add one cup of peat moss after each use (found in the adjacent metal bear box).
- Close lid after each use.

**If you can't hold it...**

• Backcountry users must locate latrines at least 1/4-mile from any water source and 100 yards away from any campsite, trail, or archeological site.

• Latrines must be at least six inches deep. It's a good idea to carry a trowel or shovel for digging latrines.

• Toilet paper must be carried out of the backcountry as trash. Burning of toilet paper is prohibited due to risk of wildfire. Carry plastic bags for use in carrying out toilet paper.

***Left:*** **High Chisos designated campsites, such as Southwest 4, offer privacy and maximum benefit from the natural surroundings.**

***Right:*** **Composting toilets are situated at four locations in the High Chisos for the convenience of the visiting public.**

## Water in the Mountains

The dry desert air quickly uses up the body's water reserves. We recommend that you carry a minimum of one gallon of water per person per day in the summer, slightly less in the winter. For half-day hikes, carry at least 2 quarts per person.

**But the map shows a spring here...**

At the risk of repeating the obvious, Big Bend is a desert park. Desert water is precious, ephemeral, and unpredictable. The amount of available water in the backcountry has everything to do with rainfall—no rain means no water. Never stake your life on a water source that might not be present.

**Cache and Carry**

Responsible backcountry users pack in all of the water they plan on using (recommended one gallon per person per day). Plan on using available water sources in the backcountry to augment the water supply you carry (filter all water taken from the backcountry); never stake your life on intermittent water sources.

Regardless of what you may have hear, Boot Spring is unreliable and usually dry. Depending on the time of year, and the amount of rainfall received, water may be available in small pools and depressions along the Boot Canyon Trail. Look for these pools between Boot Spring and the Northeast Rim trail junction. This water is vital to wildlife—please keep it clean. We recommend that this water also be filtered before use.

**Desert Water**

Springs and tinajas (depressions in rock where water collects) are unreliable and may be unsafe to drink. Springs are rare in the desert and wildlife depend on them. Please carry enough water to supply your own needs.

**Water may be filtered from pools in Boot Canyon, when available.**

## Food Storage

Campers in Big Bend's backcountry attract wildlife not only by their presence, but by the water and food they bring with them. Do your part to properly store food, water and other attactive items away from the reach of animals, whether you are backpcaking in the Chisos Mountains or camping at a primitive roadsite campsite.

Black bear, birds, javelina, skunks, kangaroo rats and other animals can and will explore your campsite looking for scraps of food.

There really are no problem animals—only problem people. With your help, wildlife and humans can live safely together in Big Bend.

Store ALL edible items in the animal-proof food lockers provided in all Chisos Mountains campsites. This means things a bear would eat, such as:

- Food (even canned and freeze-dried)
- Water bottles, filters, and any other liquids
- Trash
- Dirty dishes
- Toiletries such as soap, toothpaste, deodorant, and sunscreen.

Do not leave edible items unattended at any time.

NEVER leave edible items in your pack or take them into your tent at night. Do not eat in your tent.

Keep your camp clean of food scraps, grease, etc. Cook away from your sleeping area. Dispose of cooking water in the camper sinks in the Chisos Basin campground or well away from camp in the backcountry. Strain the water to insure that you are not dumping food scraps on the ground.

Pack out ALL trash, including food scraps and grease. Don't create a problem for the next campers. Do not leave food or trash in the storage locker.

Break down your tent when not in use. Wildife can be curious or attacted by food smells and may explore your tent, causing expensive damage. Leave backpacks open at night, too.

## Getting Help / Staying Safe

Backcountry areas are not inherently dangerous; they are, however, unpredictable places where proper planning and experience can be the key to a safe and enjoyable trip.

**1. Have a plan and share it**

Whether hiking solo or in a group, you need to become familiar with the area you will be hiking, the hazards, and the expected weather. The process of getting ready will include obtaining maps to review the area you will hike, briefing all members of the group on route selection, having a turnaround time, and developing alternate route selections. Let someone know where you are going, when, your departure point, your planned route and expected time of return.

**2. Carry proper equipment, clothing and food**

Test your equipment before leaving. Having a little extra clothing, especially for inclement weather, may weigh a bit more, but it is worth it when things go sour. The same rule of "a little extra can't hurt" applies to food and drink. During the hotter summer months, extra water is especially important, even on shorter hikes and even in areas of high humidity. Dehydration comes on quickly and leads to other, more serious, problems. Better to lug around more than to be stranded with less than you need to survive.

**3. Know your limits—and those of the other individuals in your group**

A military unit travels at the speed of its slowest member, and that is a good way to think about how to hike. Constant communication is also key: If traveling in a group, you should use a buddy system. Checking your partner for energy levels, blisters, food consumption and fatigue can prevent problems down the trail.

**4. Always bring along proper emergency equipment**

When hiking by yourself, ensure that you have, at minimum, a first aid kit. Some recommended items include adhesive bandages, medical tape, over-the-counter pain relievers, moleskin, antibacterial ointment, a compress or two, and spare headlamp batteries. If traveling in a group, have a "community" first-aid kit with additional splints, pads and braces.

**5. Learn in advance what to do if things go bad**

Park rangers typically encourage hikers in genuine distress to "hug a tree," which means staying where you are until help comes to you. You can last a long time with the gear you have with you. Whistles and mirrors are priceless. *Cellphones are not generally reliable*.

## In Case of Fire

Fire is a normal part of a healthy natural environment. One result of fire's impact on the High Chisos is the beautiful oak-pinyon forest of the higher reaches of the Chisos.

During your stay in the backcountry there is a possibility of a wildland fire starting due to lightning or a human cause. Please be aware of this and take precautions. As you hike, note directions of possible escape routes if evacuation becomes necessary.

It is not uncommon to see clouds hanging over the mountains that may look like smoke. These clouds are called rain dogs and are often mistaken for smoke from a wildland fire.

In order to prevent an unnecessary evacuation, ask two questions:

- Do you smell smoke?
- Is there obvious movement/buildup of smoke from top to bottom?

**In case of fire or smoke:**

- Remain calm, do not panic.
- Do not investigate area of smoke.
- Watch for fixed-wing aircraft or helicopters. These aircraft may try to drop messages with further instructions.
- If directed, proceed to safe area. If exiting down Blue Creek or Juniper Canyon wait in parking area for park personnel for shuttle.
- Checkout with park personnel to prevent an unnecessary search.

**Evacuation routes**

During your stay it is your responsibility to carry a map of the High Chisos trails system. That map will be indispensable in finding your way safely out of the high country in the event of a wildland fire.

In case of a wildland fire there are four primary escape routes on trails out of the High Chisos:

- Juniper Canyon Trail. This trail leaves the High Chisos just south of the Boot Canyon Cabin from the Boot Canyon Trail. Follow this trail until you reach the parking area at the end of the trail. Approx. 6.2 miles
- Blue Creek Trail. This route leave the High Chisos from the Laguna Meadows trail. Follow the Blue Creek Trail until you reach the Blue Creek Ranch parking area on the Ross Maxwell Drive . Approx 5.5 miles.
- Boot Canyon to Pinnacles Trail. This trail will lead you to the Basin Developed area.
- Laguna Meadows Trail. This route leads back to the Basin Developed Area.

## Resources

Proper planning and preparation is the key to a successful trip. Read the detailed information in this publication. Make sure that the degree of difficulty of your itinerary is compatible with all members of your party. The elevation levels and changes involved in hiking in the High Chisos can be jarring for those who live at or near sea level.

We are unable to provide detailed trip planning services over the phone. It is your responsibility to plan and prepare your outing. hiking and camping guidebooks and topographic maps are available for reference at Visitor Centers. They are also available for purchase through the Big Bend Natural History Association's bookstores, by internet order, and at many outdoor stores.

### Plan Ahead

Extensive backcountry planning information, including this campsite book, maps, trail descriptions and other material can be found on the park website at: http://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/backcountry.htm

A Backcountry Planning Worksheet is also available on the website for roughing out your intinerary. If you bring this form along with you, it can greatly speed up the permit process and assist you in having the backcountry experience you desire!

The Backcountry Planning Worksheet can be found at: http://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/upload/BC_worksheet.pdf

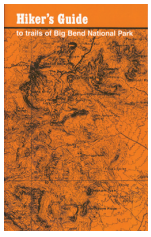
### Solo hikers

Solo hikers obtaining a backcountry camping permit are required to fill out and submit a Solo Hiker information sheet at the time they obtain their camping permit. Solo hikers must return their permit at the end of their hike, or make notification to any visitor center that they have left the backcountry. Permits must be returned or notification made within 12 hours of leaving the backcountry.

The solo hiker form and additional information can be found on the park website at: http://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/bc_solo-hikers.htm

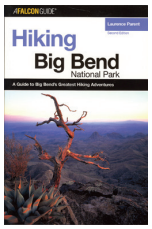
**Pre-planning is essential to a successful backcountry experience**

Guide books and maps are an excellent way of preparing for your trip. The Big Bend Natural History Association is a nonprofit organization working with the National Park Service to assist Big Bend's educational and interpretive activities, cultural programs, and special projects. They stock a number of publications that are excellent pre-planning guides. Any of the publications listed are highly recommended, and may be purchased in person or through the mail. Shop their online bookstore at http://bigbendbookstore.org/ or order by phone 432 477-2236.

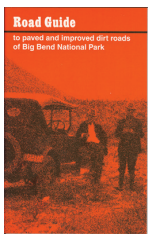



*Hiker's Guide to Big Bend National Park*
Updated in 2005. Covers all major trails in the park, from short self-guiding nature trails to strenuous backpacking routes. $1.95

*Guide to backcountry roads*
Updated in 2004. Detailed mileage logs of Old Ore Road, Glenn Spring Road and River Road. Good descriptions of historic sites and scenery. $1.95




*Hiking Big Bend*
In collaboration with National Park rangers, Laurence Parent has compiled a comprehensive guide to 44 of the most popular hikes. Photos show terrain and views. Describes difficulty, elevation changes, and maps needed. Also includes three hikes in Big Bend Ranch State Park. $14.95




*Guide to paved and improved dirt roads* Describes points of interest visible from all paved and improved dirt roads in the park. $1.95

*Chisos Mountains Trails Map*
A topographic map that includes all trails in the Chisos Mountains. Includes trail lengths and descriptions. 99¢

# High Chisos Campsites

**Let's go camping!**
There are 42 designated backpacking campsites divided into 14 campsite areas along the trail system in the High Chisos Mountains. These campsites are designed and located to provide access to nearly every portion of the High Chisos and still protect the landscape by focusing impacts.

The closest campsites to the trailhead area in the Chisos Basin are approximately one mile in, while the most isolated are seven to eight miles away, depending one your rate of travel.

Most of the year, campsites will be available at or close to your intended overnight destination. When planning a trip into the High Chisos it is important to keep time of year in mind. The Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break holidays are peak periods of use where often every available designated campsite might be occupied for several days at a time. Additionally, the annual peregrine falcon closure limits access to the trail and campsites in the area of the southeast rim for several months.

**What does a designated campsite have?**
Each designated campsite in the High Chisos offers the following ammenities:

- One or more tent pads
- One or more animal-proof food storage boxes
- Tree cover and some shelter from the elements

**What do the designated campsites look like?**
The following pages provide a brief catalog of the designated backcountry campsites in along the High Chisos trail system.

The descriptions are organized clockwise around the trail system from the Chisos Basin trailhead area. Beginning with the campsite areas along the Pinnacles Trail, each campsite grouping is detailed in a two-page spread that provides campsite sizes,  description, maps and photographs.

**Which designated campsite is the best?**
A cynic would tell you that for the most part, the designated campsites all look the same and from a certain prespective this sentiment is correct; however, each campsite offers a different impression of the natural, recreational, and scenic values of the Chisos Mountains. For those who return to Big Bend National Park, and the Chisos Mountains, experience will eventually best determine what campsite is your favorite.

***Right*: Setting up camp at the Southwest 4 campsite.**

JORDAN TIDWELL

***Preceding page*: The Blue Creek 2 (BL-2) campsite is located along the upper section of the Blue Creek Trail.**

# Juniper Flat Campsites

**DIRECTIONS**
The Juniper Flat campsites are 1 mile from the Basin trailhead via the Pinnacles trail. Each campsite is along its own signed spur trail. All campsites are approximately 150 feet off of the main Pinnacles trail.

**USUAL TRAIL CONDITIONS**
The first 1/2 mile is fairly steep, after which the trail becomes moderately difficult. The Pinnacles trail is well maintained and easy to follow all year. The pinnacles trail is the steeper, yet shorter route to the High Chisos backcountry and the South Rim area.

**CAMPSITE SPECIFICS**
JF1: Large campsite with two level sites for tents with logs that make nice seats. Very private and surrounded by trees. Good shade throughout most of the day.

JF2: Nice open site with little afternoon shade. Close to main trail.

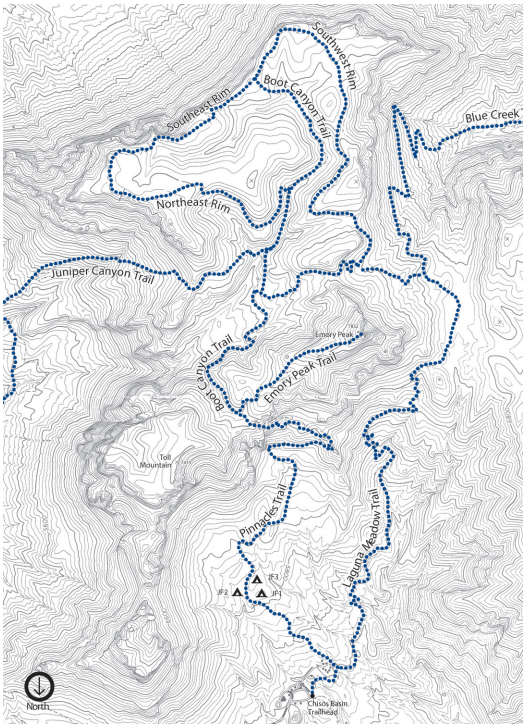
JF3: Large circular and secluded site with a tree in the middle. Not much shade in the afternoon but great shade in the morning from mountains.

**VIEWS**
JF1: Excellent views of Casa Grande. Nearby view of the basin area.

JF2: Sits near the base of Toll Mountain and offers views of Casa Grande and surrounding peaks.

JF3: Nice views of Casa Grande & Toll Mountain. All sites have nice sunset views.

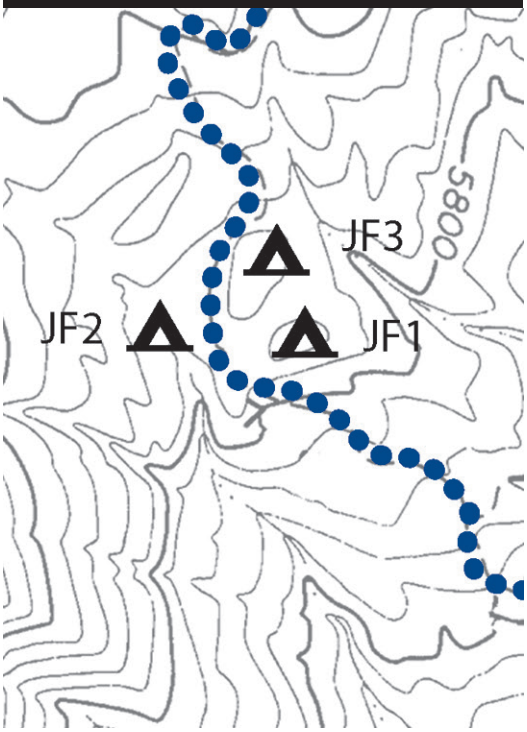
**WATER SOURCES**
There is NO water available in the Juniper Flat area. The closest water is at the Basin Visitor Center spigot. Always carry adequate water for cooking, drinking, and washing (suggested 1 gallon/person/24 hours).




**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| JF-1 | 4 | 1 |
| JF-2 | 6 | 3 |
| JF-3 | 6 | 3 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: Meadow along the trail near Juniper Flat 3.**

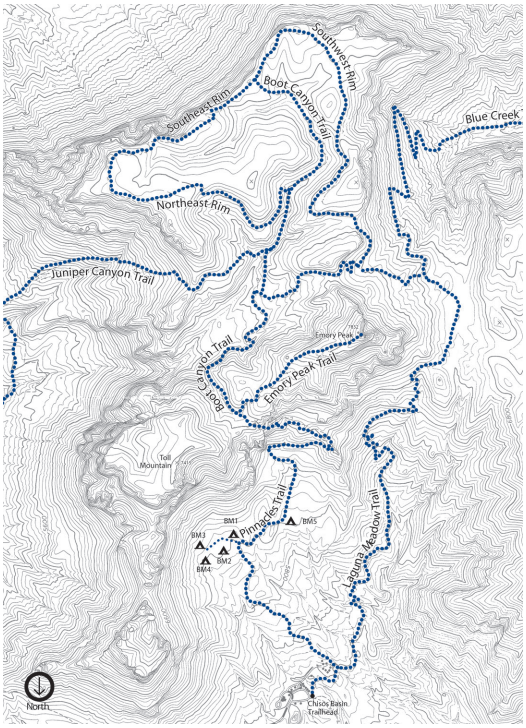
***Middle left*: Juniper Flat 1**

***Middle right*: Juniper Flat 2**

***Bottom left*: Juniper Flat 3**

***Bottom right*: Steps to the Juniper Flat overlook leave the trail near the Juniper Flat 1 campsite.**

# Boulder Meadow Campsites




**DIRECTIONS**
The Boulder Meadow campsites are located 1½ mile from the Basin trailhead via the Pinnacles trail. Campsites 1-4 are situated along a spur trail which is ¼ mile long. Campsite 5 is along a separate spur trail which begins 1/4 mile past the trail to sites 1-4.

**USUAL TRAIL CONDITIONS**
The first 1/2 mile is fairly steep, after which the trail becomes moderately difficult. The Pinnacles trail is well maintained and easy to follow all year. The pinnacles trail is the steeper, yet shorter route to the High Chisos backcountry and the South Rim area.

**CAMPSITE SPECIFICS**
BM1: Some shade but not in actual footprints of site due to dead trees. Private with a bit of an incline at tent sites.

BM2: Smaller than BM1 with no shade in afternoon. Short spur trail that leads to a nice place to sit and watch the sunset.

BM3: Very nice site with large boulders. Best shade of all five sites. Lots of thin trees.

BM4: Nice private site with good views. Tent sites are flat and shaded all morning.

BM5: Approximately ¼ mile from BM1-4, BM5 is the largest of the BM sites with 3 nice tent sites.

**VIEWS**
BM1-2: Great views of Casa Grande and surrounding woodland.

BM3-4: Both sites offer pretty views of Toll Mountain and Casa Grande.

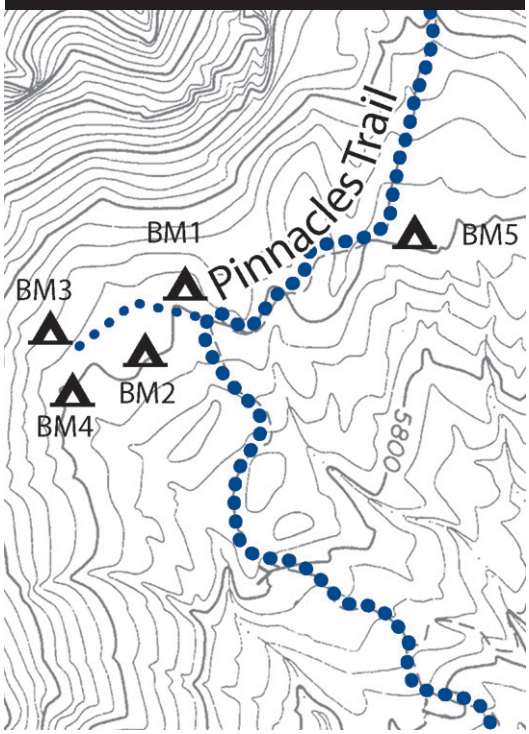
BM-5: Distant views are restricted from the tent area, but nearby views are great.

**WATER SOURCES**
There is NO water available in the Boulder Meadow area. The closest water is at the Basin Visitor Center spigot. Always carry adequate water for cooking, drinking, and washing (suggested 1 gallon/person/24 hours)

**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| BM-1 | 4 | 2 |
| BM-2 | 4 | 2 |
| BM-3 | 4 | 2 |
| BM-4 | 4 | 2 |
| BM-5 | 6 | 2 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: Boulder Meadow 1**

***Middle left*: Boulder Meadow 2**

***Middle right*: Boulder Meadow 3**

***Bottom left*: Boulder Meadow 4**

***Bottom right*: Boulder Meadow 5**

# Pinnacles Campsites

**DIRECTIONS**
The Pinnacles campsites are located along the Pinnacles Trail, approximately 2.5 miles from the Chisos Basin Trailhead. The three campsites are along a single spur trail to the east of the main trail. The spur trail is 350 yards long and ends at campsite PI-3.

**USUAL TRAIL CONDITIONS**
The first 1/2 mile is fairly steep, after which the trail becomes moderately difficult. The Pinnacles trail is well maintained and easy to follow all year. The pinnacles trail is the steeper, yet shorter route to the High Chisos backcountry and the South Rim area.

**CAMPSITE SPECIFICS**
PI-1: Large boulders surround this pretty site. The campsite is very private, and provides great shade throughout the day.

PI-2: A large boulder provides separation and privacy from site PI-3. This site has a lot of trees and surrounding vegetation to provide great shade all day long.

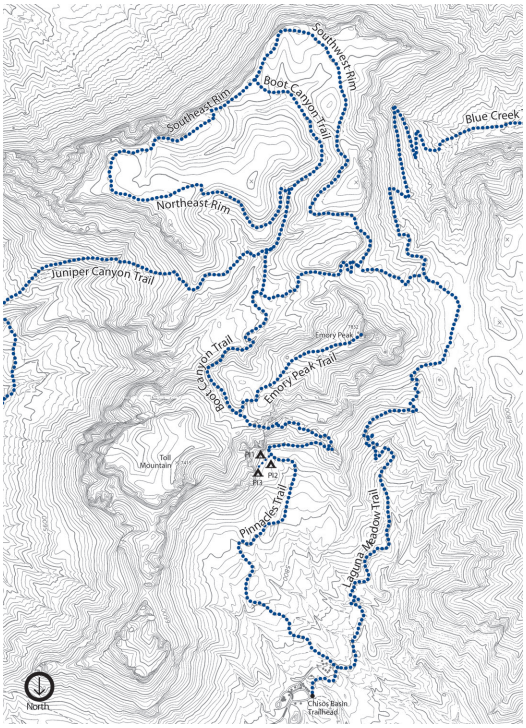
PI-3: This is a very large site. A few logs provide a sitting area. Adequate shade is provided by some dead trees.

**VIEWS**
PI-1: This site lies at the base of the ridge and provides great views of the Pinnacles.

PI-2: This site is very wooded with some views over the tree tops. A short spur trail leads to a nice spot to view the sunset through the Window.

PI-3: Restricted views of the Pinnacles above nearby treetops.

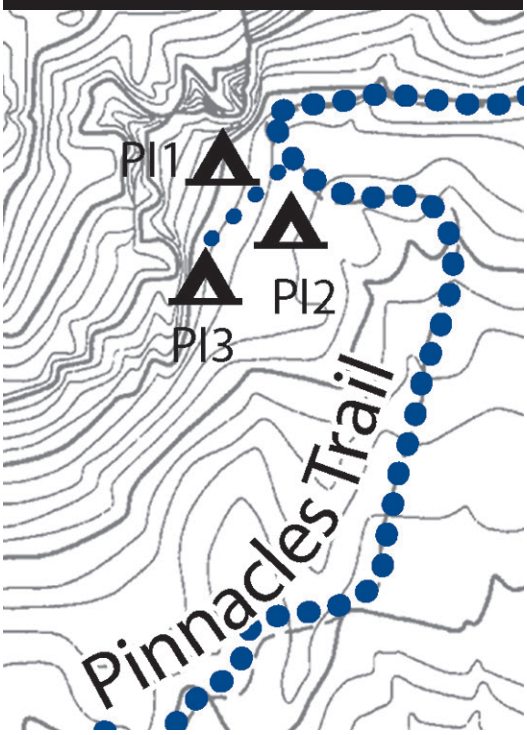
**WATER SOURCES**
There is NO water available in the Pinnacles area. The closest water is at the Basin Visitor Center spigot. Always carry adequate water for cooking, drinking, and washing (suggested 1 gallon/person/24 hours).




**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| PI-1 | 4 | 1 |
| PI-2 | 6 | 2 |
| PI-3 | 10 | 3 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: The rock Pinnacles between Toll Mountain and Emory Peak.**

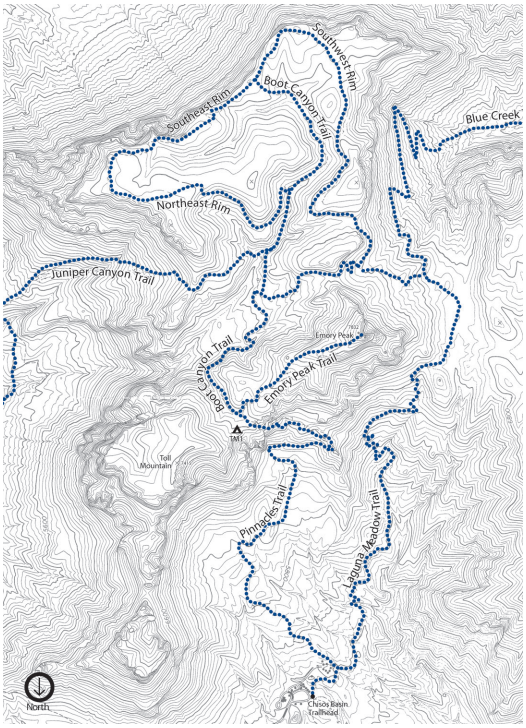
***Middle left*: The Pinnacles 1 campsite.**

***Middle right*: The Pinnacles 2 campsite.**

***Bottom left*: The Pinnalces 3 campsite.**

***Bottom right*: In between switchbacks along the Pinnacles Trail.**

# Toll Mountain Campsite




**Directions**
The Toll Mountain campsite is located along the Pinnacles Trail at the top of Pinnacles Pass, 3.7 miles from the Basin Trailhead. The campsite is 80 yards off of the main trail.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The first 1/2 mile out of the Basin is fairly steep, after which the trail becomes moderately difficult. The Pinnacles trail is well maintained and easy to follow all year long. Several sections of switchbacks offer fantastic views. Please do NOT cut switchbacks. The pinnacles trail is the steeper, yet shorter route to the High Chisos backcountry and the South Rim area.

**Campsite Specifics**
This is a small campsite that offers great views and complete privacy for up to four people. Not much protection from wind and only moderate shade.

**Views**
Nice views of the Basin and the Window from the campsite, and more fantastic views are available nearby.

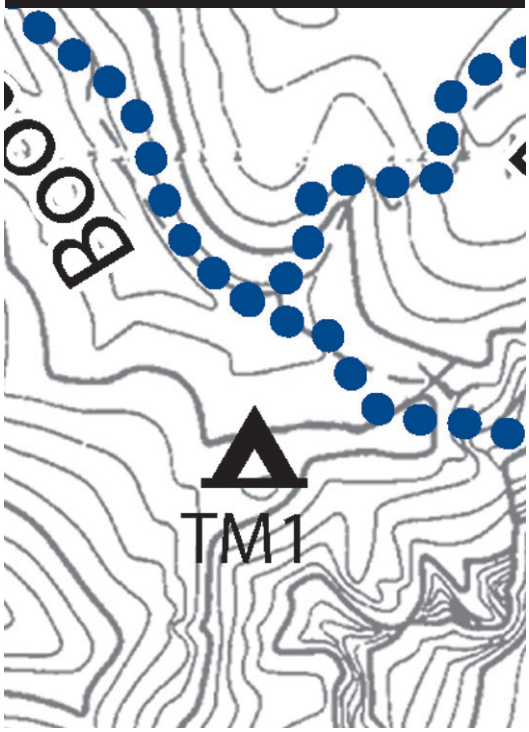
**Water Sources**
None. There is NO water anywhere in the Toll Mountain area. It is vital that you carry adequate water for drinking, cooking, and washing. Plan on at least one gallon/24 hours/person.

**Notes**
A solar-composting pit toilet is near the spur trail to the campsite.

**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| TM-1 | 4 | 1 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: Pinnacles Pass, at the top of the Pinnacles Trail.**

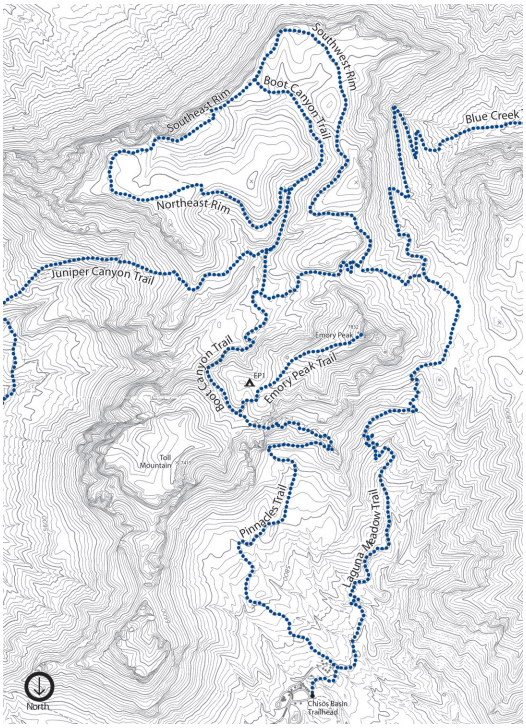
***Middle left*: Beginning of the campsite spur trail.**

***Middle right*: Toll Mountain 1 campsite pad; this is a small site.**

***Bottom left*: Upper portion of the Pinnacles Trail.**

***Bottom right*: View towards Boot Canyon from the TM1 campsite.**

# Emory Peak Campsite




**Directions**
The Emory Peak campsite is located 0.2 mile up the trail to the summit of Emory Peak. Total distance from the Basin Trailhead is 3.7 miles via the Pinnacles Trail.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The first 1/2 mile out of the Basin is fairly steep, after which the trail becomes moderately difficult. The Pinnacles trail is well maintained and easy to follow all year long. The Emory Peak trail is rocky and steep.

**Campsite Specifics**
This small campsite is exposed on the top of a ridge. The site offers some shade throughout the day, but is very exposed to wind. This is a cozy site and very private with sublime views.

**Views**
Beautiful views of Boot Canyon, the backside and summit of Emory Peak.

**Water Sources**
None. There is NO water anywhere in the Emory Peak area. It is vital that you carry adequate water for drinking, cooking, and washing. Plan on at least one gallon/24 hours/person.

**Caution**
The trail to the summit of Emory is very steep and not for those afraid of heights. Consult with a park ranger about possible mountain lion or black bear encounters. Always use bear boxes at the campsite and never leave food or packs unattended.

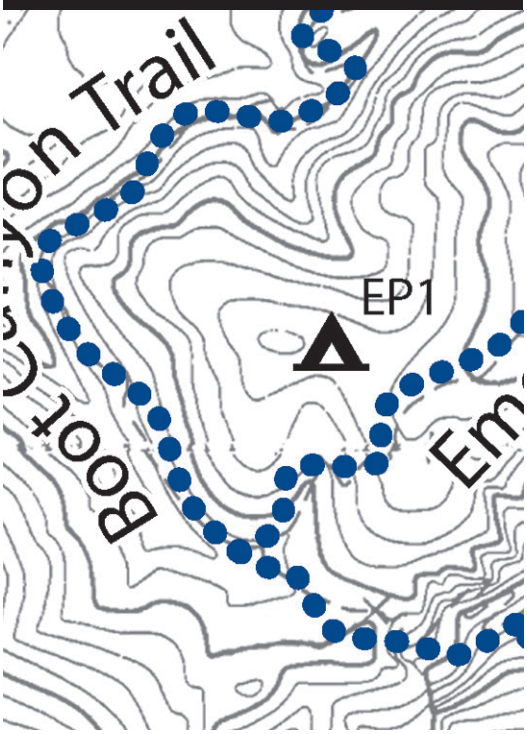
**Remarks**
This campsite is located 0.8 mile from the summit of Emory Peak. Past the campsite the Emory Peak trail is very steep. The last 50 yards to the summit requires hand and foot climbing up steep rocks, but the reward is endless 360° scenery.

**Note**
The Emory Peak trail is scheduled for a major reroute in 2008 that will change the distance the campsite is located up the trail.

**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| EP-1 | 6 | 2 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: Hiking up the Emory Peak Trail.**

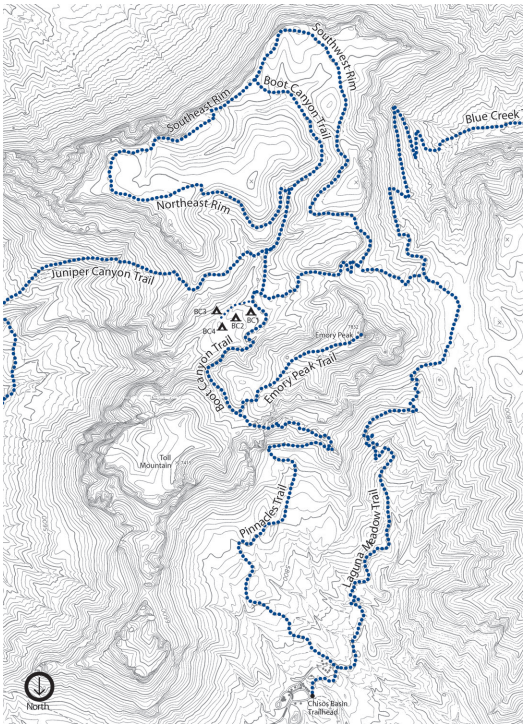
***Middle left*: Beginning of the campsite spur trail.**

***Middle right*: Emory Peak 1 campsite pad and area.**

***Bottom left*: View to the east from the EP1 campsite.**

***Bottom right*: Steep steps up the Emory Peak trail.**

# Boot Canyon Campsites




**Directions**
The Boot Canyon campsites are located in Boot Canyon, 4.5 miles from the Chisos Basin Trailhead via the Pinnacles Trail. All campsites are located along a 1/2 mile long spur trail.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The Pinnacles Trail, Boot Canyon Trail, and campsite access trail are all well maintained and generally in excellent condition year round. All the trails are well marked. Please don't cut switchbacks along the Pinnacles Trail. There is abundant shade in the entire Boot Canyon area.

**Campsite Specifics**
BC-1: A large site with many trees. The site is close to the toilet and spur trail.

BC-2: This extra large site fits 12 people. Isolated with great shade. The access trail leads 100' down to a cozy camping area.

BC-3: Approx. ½ mile down access trail. Private with many trees and much shade.

BC-4: Approx. ½ mile down access trail. Private with many trees and great shade.

**Views**
The Boot Canyon campsites are located within a heavily wooded canyon. There is great shade and wind protection, but no distant views from any site.

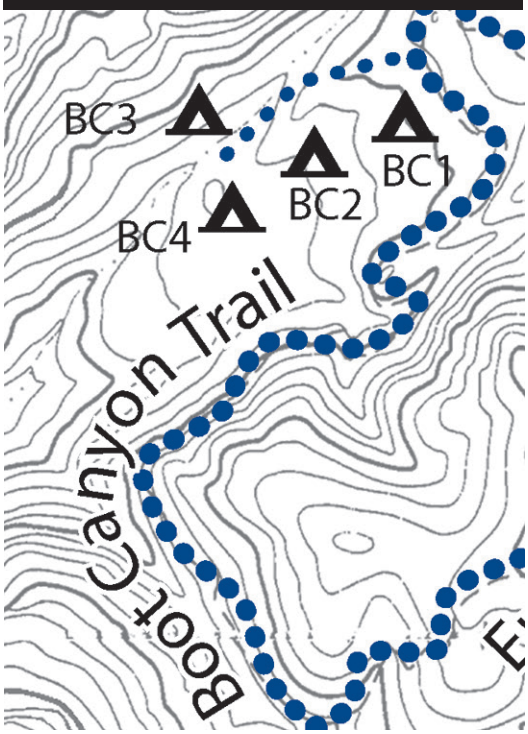
**Water Sources**
Boot Spring is a seasonal/intermittent source of water. This water must be treated before drinking. No bathing or washing in the spring area. Check with a ranger about current flow. Hikers on 1-2 day trips should plan on carrying all their necessary water. Plan on at least one gallon/24 hours/person.

**Remarks**
Each spring/summer, Colima Warblers nest in Boot Canyon. These birds are found nowhere else in the entire U.S.

**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| BC-1 | 6 | 2 |
| BC-2 | 12 | 5 |
| BC-3 | 4 | 2 |
| BC-4 | 6 | 2 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: The Boot Rock, in Boot Canyon.**

***Middle left*: The Boot Canyon 1 campsite**

***Middle right*: The Boot Canyon 2 campsite**

***Bottom left*: The Boot Canyon 3 campsite**

***Bottom right*: The Boot Canyon 4 campsite**

# Colima Campsites

**Directions**
All of the Colima Campsites are located along the 1-mile Colima Trail. The Colima Trail connects the Pinnacles/Boot Canyon Trail with the Laguna Meadow Trail. From the Chisos Basin, the Colima Trail is 4.5 miles via the Pinnacles Trail and 4.3 miles via the Laguna Meadow Trail.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The Pinnacles Trail (gain of 1,700 feet) has several very steep switchback sections. The Laguna Meadow Trail (gain of 1,600 feet) climbs more gradually. The Colima Trail (gain/loss of 300 feet) follows a saddle along the south side of Emory Peak. All of these trails are usually in fine condition all year long.

**Campsite Specifics**
All of the Colima Campsites have their own access spur trails, are completely private from each other, and hidden from the main trail. All sites are well protected from sun and wind.

CO-1: Large site suitable for a group.

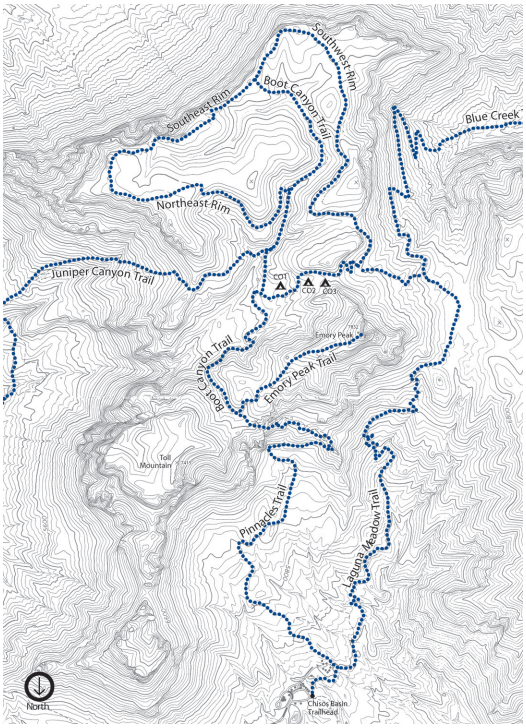
CO-2: A very tiny campsite for 3 people only.

CO-3: Nice flat, shady campsite for up to 4 people.

**Views**
The Colima Campsites are completely sheltered under oak trees and therefore have NO distant views.

**Water Sources**
Boot Spring is a seasonal/intermittent source of water. This water must be treated before drinking. No bathing or washing in the spring area. Check with a ranger about current flow. Hikers on 1-2 day trips should plan on carrying all their necessary water. Plan on at least one gallon/24 hours/person.

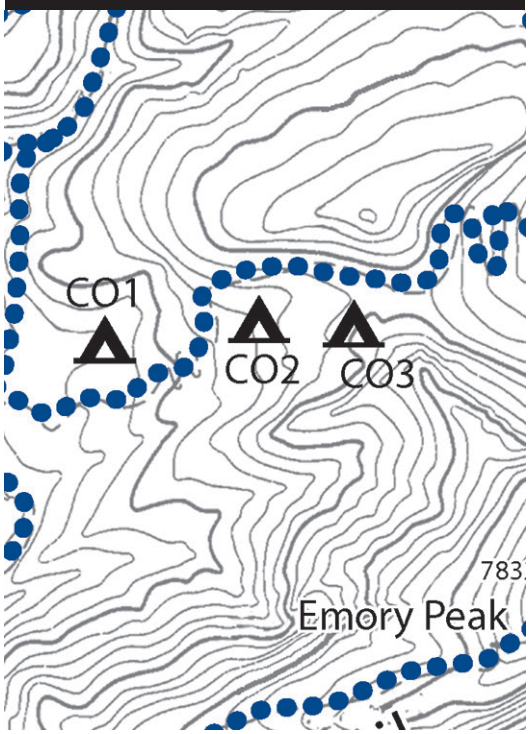
**Remarks**
Each spring/summer, Colima Warblers nest in the surrounding oak canyons. These birds are found nowhere else in the entire U.S.




**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| CO-1 | 15 | 5 |
| CO-2 | 3 | 1 |
| CO-3 | 4 | 2 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: Trail sign at the junction of the Colima and Boot Canyon Trails.**

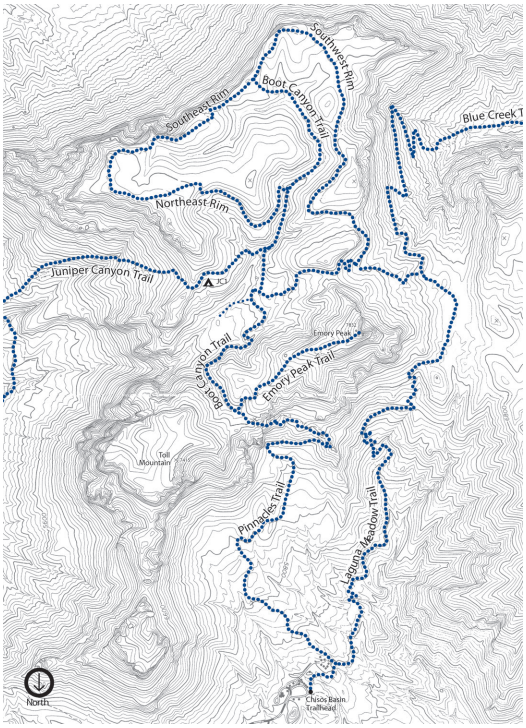
***Middle left*: The Colima 1 campsite is intended for large groups.**

***Middle right*: The Colima 2 campsite**

***Bottom left*: The Colima 3 campsite**

***Bottom right*: The Colima Trail is generally shaded and provides few opportunities for views.**

# Juniper Canyon Campsite




**Directions**
The Juniper Canyon backpack campsite is located ¼ mile down the Juniper Canyon Trail from its intersection with the Boot Canyon Trail. Total distance from the Chisos Basin Trailhead is 5.3 miles via the Pinnacles Trail or 6.2 miles via the Laguna Meadows Trail. The campsite is on the left at the end of a 100' spur trail.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The Pinnacles Trail has several steep sections and a series of sharp switchbacks. The Laguna Meadow Trail gains elevation more gradually. The access trail to the JC-1 campsite is a steep, rocky climb...watch your footing carefully here.

**Campsite Specifics**
This campsite is surrounded by many trees. Several beautiful weeping junipers provide great shade any time of the day. The site is well protected from the elements and would be a great location during high winds.

**Views**
Sorry, this campsite is surrounded by trees and offers no distant views.

**Water Sources**
Closest water source (seasonal, don't count on it) is in Boot Canyon, ¾ mile from the campsite. Upper Juniper Spring (2 miles and 1,800 ft descent from site) is also usually dry. It is vital that hikers carry adequate drinking water (minimum of 1 gallon/person/24 hours).

**Remarks**
The Juniper Canyon Trail is the only route from the High Chisos into Juniper Canyon, one of two routes to the primitive and rugged Outer Mountain Loop Trail. In early autumn portions of this trail maybe overgrown and difficult to follow.

**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| JC-1 | 6 | 2 |

**Campsite area detail**

***Above*: The lower portion of Juniper Canyon, as seen from the Chisos Mountains.**

***Middle left*: Trail sign at the junction of the Juniper Canyon and Boot Canyon Trails.**

***Middle right*: The Juniper Canyon 1 campsite.**

***Bottom left*: The Juniper Canyon Trail has many steep sections.**

***Bottom right*: Portions of the Juniper Canyon Trail can become overgrown following late summer rains and months of disuse.**

# Northeast Rim Campsites

**Directions**
The five Northeast Rim campsites are located between 6 to 7.5 miles from the Chisos Basin Trailhead via the Pinnacles Trail (8.5 miles via the Laguna Meadow Trail). The NE-4 campsite is located at the end of a spur trail on a high ridge. All other sites are situated along the spectacular 1.5-mile section of trail, high above the desert below.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The trails to the Northeast Rim are well marked, maintained, and usually in great condition all year round. The Pinnacles Trail is the most direct route to the Northeast Rim.

**Campsite Specifics**
The Northeast Rim Campsites are located along the northern edge of a high lava plateau overlooking the desert. These campsites are not located on the very edge of the rim, but 150-300' into the trees on the opposite side of the trail.

NE-1: Small level site, with only moderate shade.

NE-2: Surrounded by trees; good shelter from wind.

NE-3: Nice protection from surrounding trees.

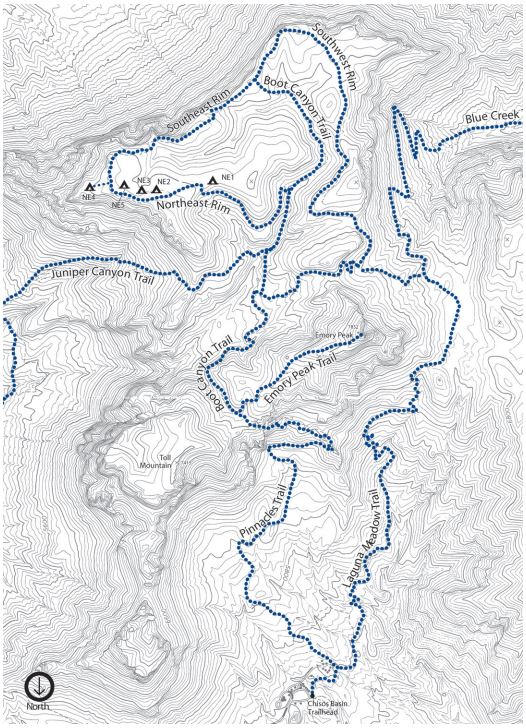
NE-4: A large site for up to 10 campers. Best shade of all.

NE-5: Very level site with only minimum shade.

**Views**
Since these campsites are not perched on the rim there are NO views off the rim from the campsites. A short walk of 200-300' from any site will provide spectacular panoramic vistas!

**Water Sources**
None. There is NO water anywhere near the Southwest Rim of the Chisos.

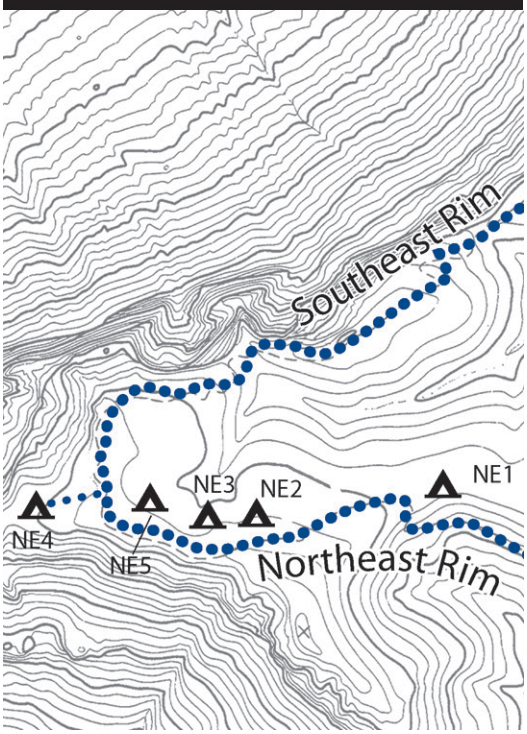
**Closure Information**
To protect breeding peregrine falcons, from Feb. 1 to May 31, the entire Southeast Rim and Northeast Rim trail to NE-4 is closed to entry; the NE-4 and NE-5 campsites are also closed during this time.




**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| NE-1 | 5 | 2 |
| NE-2 | 6 | 2 |
| NE-3 | 6 | 2 |
| NE-4 | 10 | 5 |
| NE-5 | 6 | 2 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: The Northeast 1 campsite; this campsite is open year-round.**

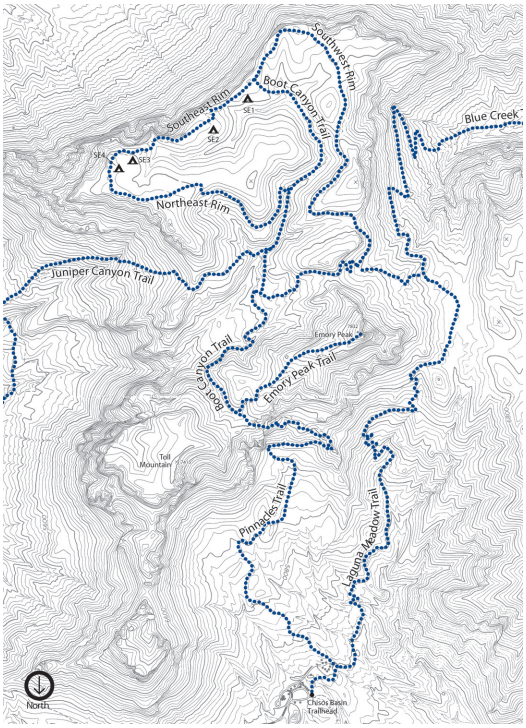
***Middle left*: The Northeast 2 campsite; this campsite is open year-round.**

***Middle right*: The Northeast 3 campsite; this campsite is open year-round.**

***Bottom left*: The Northeast 4 campsite; this campsite is large and private.**

***Bottom right*: The Northeast 5 campsite**

# Southeast Rim Campsites




**Directions**
The southeast rim campsites are located between 6.5 to 8 miles from the Chisos Basin Trailhead via either the Pinnacles/Boot Canyon or Laguna Meadows Trails. The sites are situated along a spectacular 1.5-mile section of trail, high above the desert below.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The Trails to the Southeast Rim are well marked, maintained, and usually in great condition all year round. The Pinnacles Trail is the steepest, yet most direct route to the Southeast Rim.

**Campsite Specifics**
The Southeast Rim Campsites are located along the southern edge of a high lava plateau overlooking the rugged Sierra Quemada (the burnt land) desert and into Mexico. These campsites are not located on the very edge of the rim, but situated 100-200' into the trees on the opposite side of the trail.

SE-1: Nice circular site with trees in the middle. Shady. Close to the rim.

SE-2: Great campsite with abundant shade. Close to the rim.

SE-3: A large campsite for a group of up to 10. Pretty, with beautiful trees and moderate shade.

SE-4: a small, level site with good shade.

**Views**
Since these campsites are not perched on the rim, but sheltered within the trees, there are NO views off the rim from the actual sites. A short walk of 100-200' from any site will provide SPECTACULAR panoramic vistas!

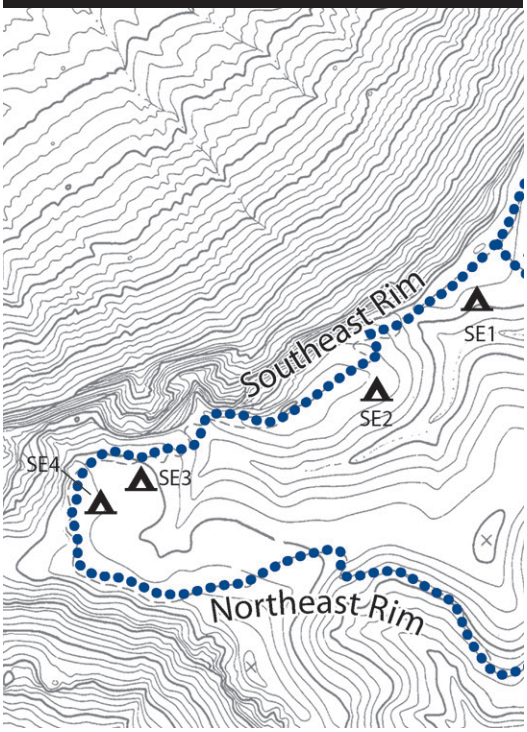
**Water Sources**
None. There is NO water anywhere near the Southeast Rim of the Chisos. It is vital that you carry adequate water for drinking, cooking, and washing.

**Closure Information**
The Southeast Rim trail and campsites are closed to all entry from February 1-May 31 to minimize disturbance to nesting peregrine falcons.

**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| SE-1 | 6 | 2 |
| SE-2 | 6 | 2 |
| SE-3 | 10 | 5 |
| SE-4 | 6 | 2 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: The sweeping panoramic view from the Southeast Rim is one of the best in the Chisos Mountains.**

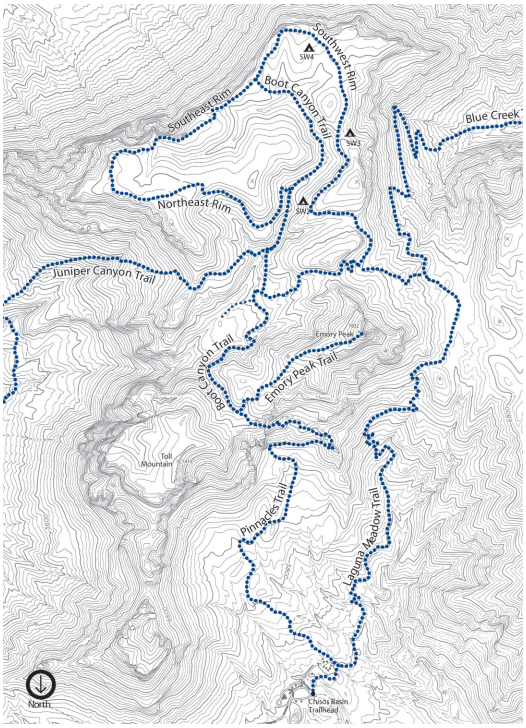
***Middle left*: The Southeast 1 campsite**

***Middle right*: The Southeast 2 campsite**

***Bottom left*: The Southeast 3 campsite**

***Bottom right*: The Southeast 4 campsite**

# Southwest Rim Campsites




**Directions**
The Southwest Rim campsites are located on a high volcanic mesa overlooking the low desert and distant mountains of Mexico. The three campsites are spread out along a 1 mile section of trail.

Via the Laguna Meadows Trail: SW-2 is 5 miles, SW-3 is 5.6 miles, SW-4 is 6.1 miles.

Via the Pinnacles Trail: SW-2 is 6.5 miles, SW-3 is 7 miles, SW-2 is 7.6 miles.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The Laguna Meadow Trail is the quickest route to these campsites. The Pinnacles Trail is steeper, but completes most of the climbing in only 3.5 miles.

**Campsite Specifics**
SW-2: Very nice, private site for up to 3 hikers. Sits in a small valley with good shade.

SW-3: Great location, and large. This site holds a group of up to 10 campers. Adequate amount of shade, but fairly exposed to wind.

SW-4: Nice, shady, and very private. Composting toilet nearby.

**Views**
SW-2: Good views of surrounding ridges and Boot Canyon.

SW-3: Excellent views off the rim of the Sierra Quemada, Mule Ears, and Sierra Ponce.

SW-4: This campsite is 200' from the rim and surrounded by trees. Great privacy, but no views from campsite.

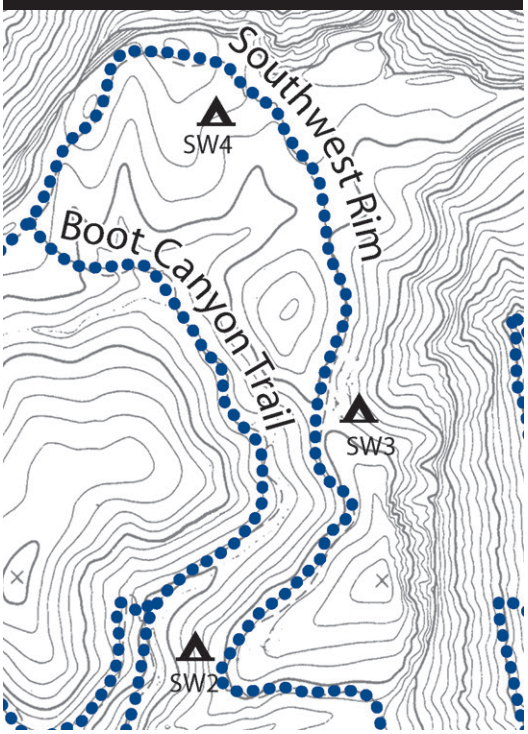
**Water Sources**
None. There is NO water anywhere near the Southwest Rim of the Chisos. It is vital that you carry adequate water for drinking, cooking, and washing. Plan on at least one gallon/person/24 hours.

**Notes**
The southwest rim is one of the park's most popular destinations for hikers and backpackers.

**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| SW-2 | 3 | 1 |
| SW-3 | 10 | 5 |
| SW-4 | 4 | 1 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: Looking to the west from the Southwest Rim Trail.**

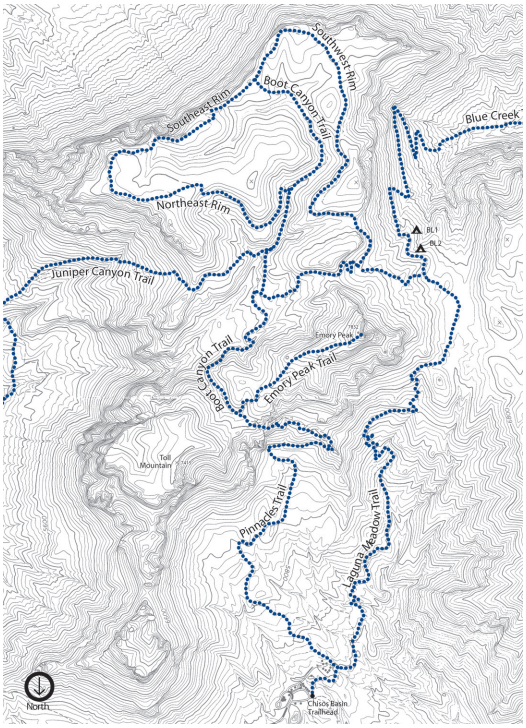
***Middle left*: The Southwest 2 campsite**

***Middle right*: The Southwest 3 campsite is the only campsite located on the rim; this can be a windy spot!**

***Bottom left*: The Southwest 4 campsite is one of the most popular campsites in the High Chisos.**

***Bottom right*: This composting toilet is located a short distance from the Southwest 4 campsite.**

# Blue Creek Campsites




**Directions**
The Blue Creek campsites are located approximately ¼ mile down the Blue Creek Trail from it's junction with the Laguna Meadow Trail. Total distance from the Chisos Basin Trailhead is 4 miles via the Laguna Meadow Trail, or 6½ miles via the Pinnacles and Colima Trails. Both sites are situated along the western side of the main trail and have private spur trails.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The Laguna Meadow Trail is a long gradual climb with several sections of switchbacks. The Blue Creek Trail is a very steep descent to the lower desert, extending through several vegetative zones, and ending near the Homer Wilson Ranch historic area. Total descent is 2,560' over 5.5 miles. All trails are usually well maintained and easy to follow.

**Campsite Specifics**
Both sites are tiny, private, and offer room for only one tent and four people. Both sites are surrounded by trees and provide good shade throughout the day.

**Views**
Both campsites have nice views nearby of surrounding ridges and of Blue Creek Canyon.

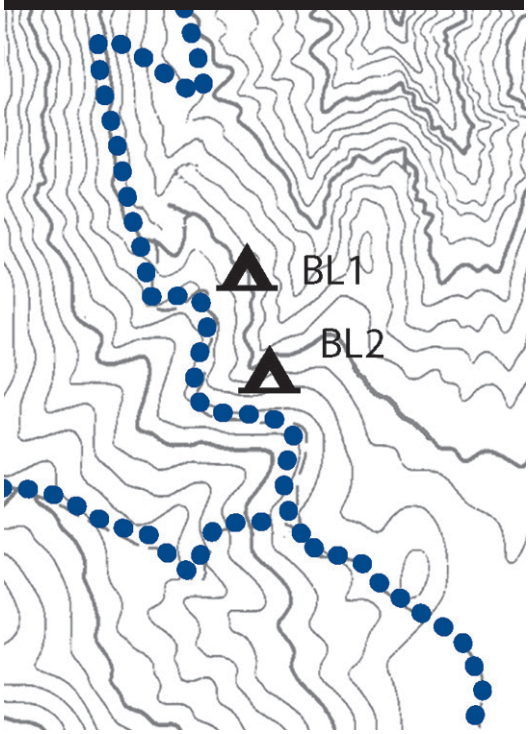
**Water Sources**
None. There is NO water anywhere near the Blue Creek Sites or in Blue Creek Canyon. It is vital that you carry adequate water for drinking, cooking, and washing. Plan on at least one gallon/person/24 hours.

**Notes**
The Blue Creek Trail is the only route from the High Chisos into Blue Creek Canyon, one of two routes to the primitive and rugged Outer Mountain Loop Trail. In early autumn portions of this trail maybe overgrown and difficult to follow.

**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| BL-1 | 4 | 1 |
| BL-2 | 4 | 1 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: Looking down Blue Creek Canyon from the trail.**

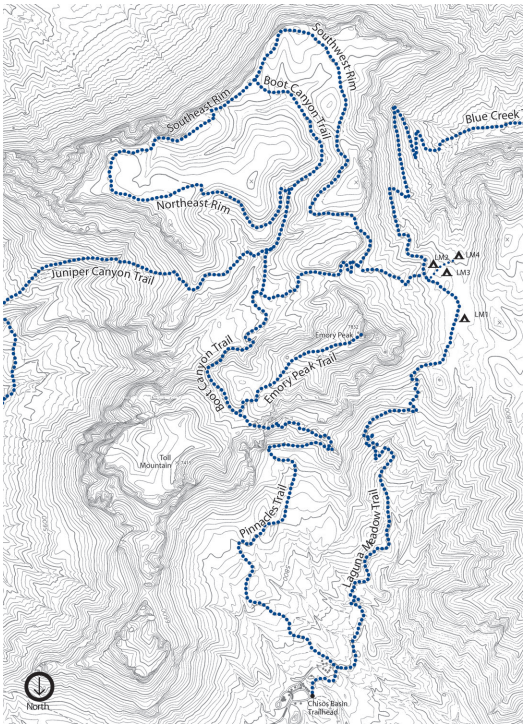
***Middle left*: The Blue Creek Canyon 1 campsite**

***Middle right*: The Blue Creek Canyon 2 campsite**

***Bottom left*: Spur trail to the BL1 campsite.**

***Bottom right*: Sign detailing the 1988 Blue Creek Canyon fire.**

# Laguna Meadow Campsites




**Directions**
The Laguna Meadow campsites are located 3.5 miles from the Basin trailhead via the Laguna Meadow Trail (or 6.5 miles via the Pinnacles and Colima Trails). LM-1 is along the same spur trail that leads to the Laguna West campsites. LM-2,3,4 are along their own spur trail just west of the Blue Creek Trail junction.

**Usual Trail Conditions**
The Laguna Meadow Trail is a gradual climb in elevation (1,600 feet). There are several sections of switchbacks. Views are great and the trail is usually in fine condition year-round.

**Campsite Specifics**
LM-1: Secluded with nice afternoon shade.

LM-2: A large, flat, shady site. Closest to nearby toilet.

LM-3: Nice site with adequate shade.

LM-4: Isolated at the end of the spur trail. Good shade.

**Views**
LM-1 has nice views of Emory Peak and surrounding Laguna Meadow area.

LM-2,3,4 sites are secluded among the trees. Views are restricted from the actual sites, but nearby views are great.

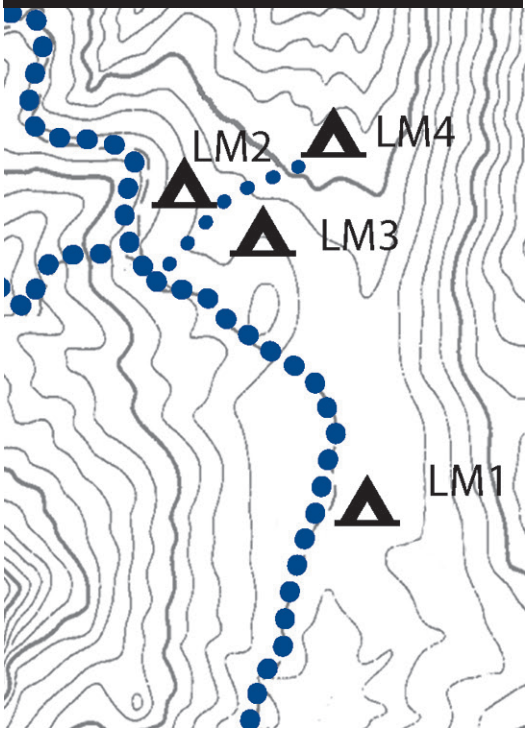
**Water Sources**
None. There is NO water anywhere near Laguna Meadows. It is vital that you carry adequate water for drinking, cooking, and washing. Plan on at least one gallon/24 hours/person.

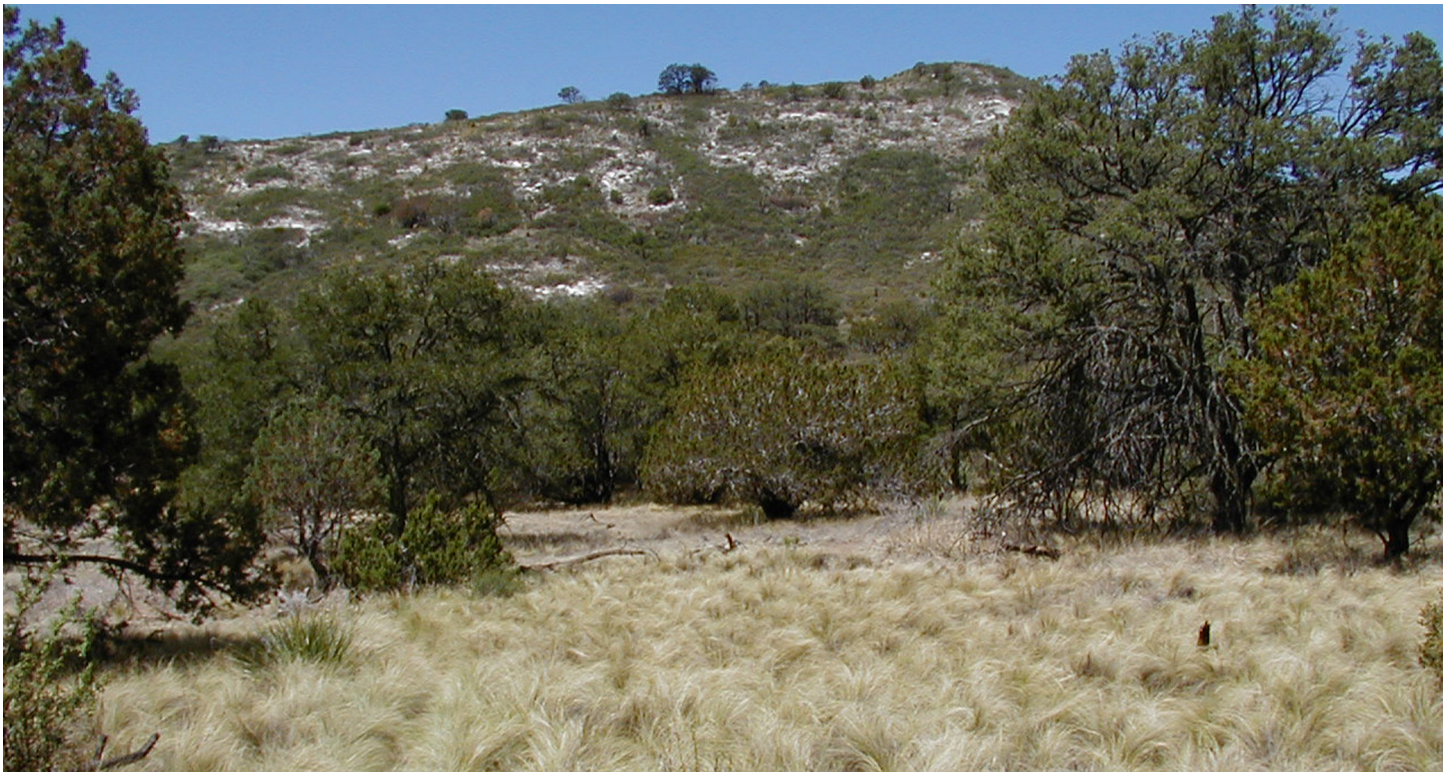
**Notes**
A solar-composting pit toilet is near the spur trail to sites LM-2,3,4.

**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| LM-1 | 6 | 2 |
| LM-2 | 10 | 5 |
| LM-3 | 6 | 2 |
| LM-4 | 6 | 2 |

**Campsite area detail**





***Above*: A Laguna Meadow view.**

***Middle left*: The Laguna Meadow 1 campsite is the only one located in the meadow itself.**

***Middle right*: The Laguna Meadow 2 campsite**

***Bottom left*: The Laguna Meadow 3 campsite**

***Bottom right*: The Laguna Meadow 4 campsite**

# Laguna West Campsites

**Directions**
The Laguna West campsites are located approximately 3.5 miles from the Basin trailhead via the Laguna Meadow Trail (or 6.8 miles via the Pinnacles and Colima Trails). All Laguna West campsites are located along a spur trail to the west of the main Laguna Meadow Trail. The spur trail is 200 yards long and ends at site LW-3.

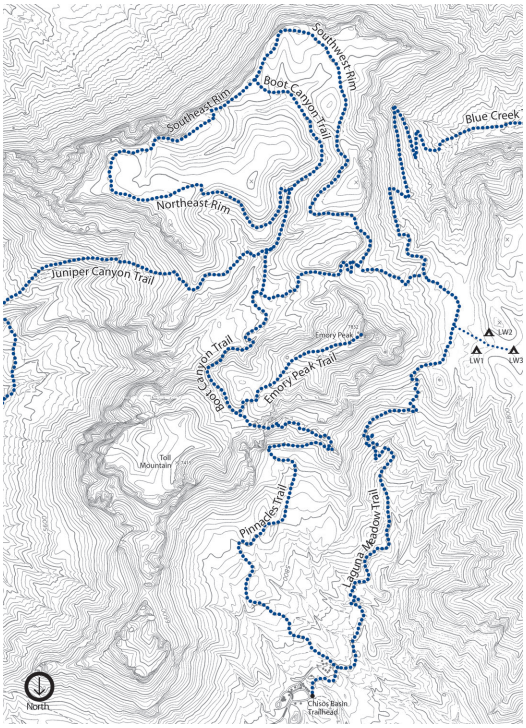
**Usual Trail Conditions**
The Laguna Meadow Trail is a gradual climb in elevation (1,600 feet). There are several sections of switchbacks. Views are great and the trail is usually in fine condition year-round.

**Campsite Specifics**
The Laguna West area is an open chaparral woodland. All Laguna West campsites are small, accommodating only 4 people each. All sites are secluded and located under small groves of pinyon pines for good shade.

**Views**
Due to the open nature of the Laguna West area, all sites have nice views. LW-1 and LW-3 have very nice views of Emory Peak. LW-2 provides views of surrounding low brushy hills.

**Water Sources**
None. There is NO water anywhere in the Laguna Meadows/Laguna West area. It is vital that you carry adequate water for drinking, cooking, and washing. Plan on at least one gallon/24 hours/person.

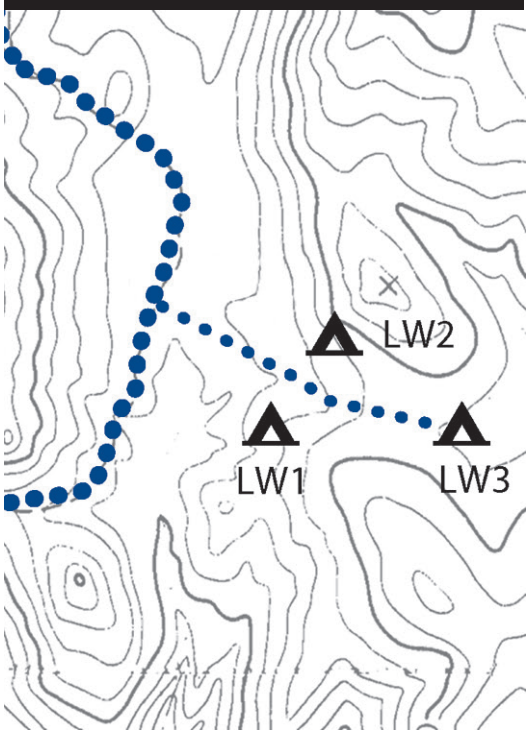
**Notes**
A solar-composting pit toilet is near the spur trail to sites LM-2,3,4.




**Campsite information**

| Campsite | # of people | # of tents |
|---|---|---|
| LW-1 | 4 | 2 |
| LW-2 | 4 | 1 |
| LW-3 | 4 | 1 |

**Campsite area detail**



***Above*: The Laguna West spur trail affords excellent views of Emory Peak.**

***Middle left*: The Laguna West 1 campsite**

***Middle right*: The Laguna West 2 campsite**

***Bottom left*: The Laguna West 3 campsite**

***Bottom right*: In 1980 a fire swept through portions of Laguna Meadow; the scar is still visable today.**

***Following pages*:**
**Hikers descending the Emory Peak Trail.**

**Starting a hike up the Pinnacles Trail.**