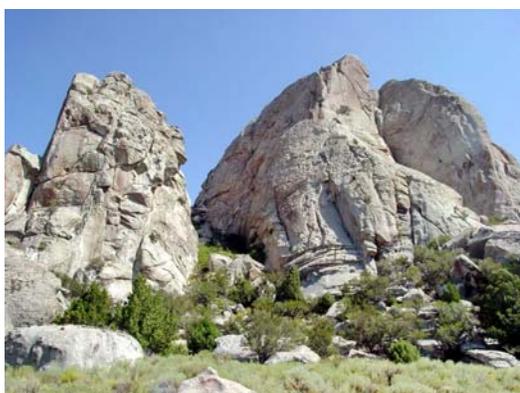


Trail Guide: Backyard Boulders

EASY MODERATE STRENUOUS



2 Miles



West side of Castle Rock (looking east) with view of Hostess Gully, one of the more popular climbing areas in the park.

Backyard Boulders Trail begins at the Stines Creek Picnic Area. The trail's gentle grade is suitable for families with children. Castle Rock is the centerpiece of this two-mile trail that also features two archeological sites (Shock and Awe Shelter and pictographs) and impressive boulders with panholes and cavernous weathering.

In late spring as Stines Creek swells from the Albion Mountains snowmelt, hikers encounter many species of wildflowers and experience the sights and songs from arriving migratory birds. In autumn, hikers are treated to the colorful foliage of aspen, chokecherry, and willow.

Signs and numbered markers are strategically located to help you find the route. There are a number of intersecting trails to climbing areas, and hikers can increase or decrease the distance by utilizing the green trails marked on the map (see reverse page).

1

Trailhead and Stines Creek Picnic Area

Although the loop trail can be walked in either direction, the numbering system and trail features are described clock-wise. From the kiosk, travel left (south) for 200 yards, then follow the trail right or west, below the popular climbs of Big Time and Little Time.

2

Shock and Awe Shelter

A short spur trail (right) leads one to a pre-historic human shelter. Here, artifacts dating to 660 AD, including a hearth feature, were discovered. These prehistoric people likely took advantage of the shelter to escape summer heat or winter winds. They probably harvested the fall pine nut crop, hunted mule deer and rabbit, and found the geologic area a secure and scenic place to live.



Shock and Awe Shelter

3

Three-pool Boulders and the Backyard Boulders

The first of the boulders reached contains three giant panholes, one which holds water most of the year. Immediately to the north of these is a boulder exhibiting one of the more dramatic examples of honey-comb, cavernous, or Tafoni weathering.



Three-Pool Boulders

4

Castle Rocks Geological Area Overlook

From this rocky ridge, hikers can view the Stines Creek riparian area below and watch for birds and other wildlife; however, it is the Castle Rocks Geologic Area that dominates one's attention. The towering spires and monoliths of the Almo Pluton fall within the managements of the state park, BLM, and Forest Service.



Castle Rocks Geological Area Overlook

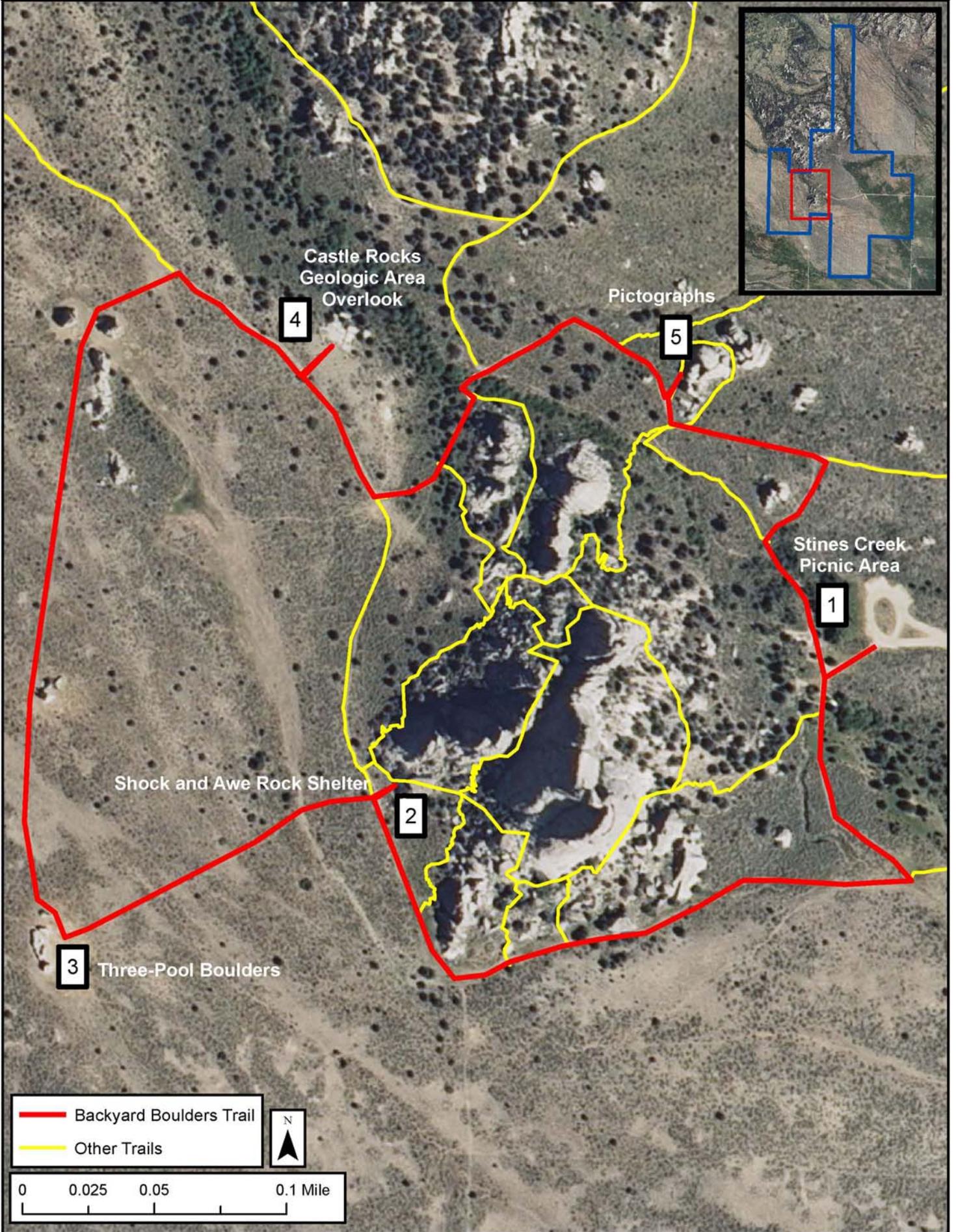
5

Prehistoric Pictographs

Another short spur trail takes you to the prehistoric pictographs and interpretive wayside exhibit. These images are rare reminders of ancient human history, and that people have interacted with this landscape for thousands of years.

The trail returns alongside Stines Creek, Kid Rock and the Stines Creek Picnic Area. For other family friendly hikes, rangers suggest the trails to the Almo Creek Wetland and Eagle Rock Grove. For the adventurous, take the five-mile, three-hour Castle Rock Trail.

Backyard Boulders Trail Map



1. Honey-comb or cavernous weathering is nowhere more dramatic than on the backyard boulder immediately north of Three-pool Boulder. Please enjoy, but do not climb on this fragile geologic feature.

2. Pictographs are found in the geographic area known as "Tiny Town." The pictographs were rediscovered by a ranger and were later documented through infra-red photography, which enhances the visible image. The pictographs are faded but still present. Please do not touch, and help the park protect these cultural resources.