Boathouse Cove Road

Jimbilnan & Pinto Valley Wilderness

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Explore!

Boathouse Cove Road is a 9.1-mile backcountry road that runs from Northshore Road south to the Virgin Basin of Lake Mead. The first couple of miles of the backcountry road is fairly flat then the road gets a little more difficult. A 4X4 is recommended.

"A wilderness is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

The backcountry road runs between the Jimbilnan Wilderness Area and the Pinto Valley Wilderness Area. The road itself is not designated as wilderness but all the surrounding land is wilderness. This area is very remote. Please be prepared before you decide to explore.

Beautiful mountains and washes provide excellent scenery and pristine hiking. Watch for hawks and eagles.There are two primitive backcountry campgrounds; one with a spectacular view of the Overton Arm in the distance.

Directions

Lake Mead National Recreation Area is located east of Las Vegas, Nevada. At the Recreation Area drive north on Northshore Road towards Overton, Nevada. Turn right a few yards past mile marker 30 in between Callville Bay and Echo Bay onto approved backcountry road 97.

The road winds it way through the Black Mountains to Boathouse Cove at the mouth of the narrows in Virgin Basin.

Flora

The two wilderness areas have a variety of Mojave Desert plants. One of the more common is the creosote. Creosote was used for centuries by the Native Americans for medicinal purposes. The small leaves have a waxy coating to protect the plant from sun and heat.

Gypsum soils in the area provide the perfect habitat for growing Las Vegas bear poppy; a rare and protected plant. When conditions are right the plant produces beautiful and delicate yellow flowers. Please never pick any wildflowers in the desert.

Fauna

Mammals found in this area include desert bighorn sheep, cottontail, ground squirrels, bobcats, coyotes and mountain lion.

Reptiles include side-blotched lizards, zebra-tailed lizards, collared lizards, chuckwallas and rattlesnakes.

Watch for large raptors such as hawks, eagles and falcons. All have been found to nest in the park.

Geology

The two wilderness areas have amazing geology; towering cliffs, deep narrow canyons and several ancient lava flows. The Black Mountains are volcanic, and the Cleopatra Volcano is actually half of a volcano that was split by an earthquake fault. The other half of the volcano is Hamblin Mountain, located 12 miles to the south at Callville Bay.

Things to do...

7 Leave No Trace Principles

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces
3. Dispose of waste properly
4. Leave what you find
5. Minimize campfire impacts
6. Respect wildlife
7. Be considerate to other visitors

CAUTION

Backcountry travel is not recommended in the summer at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Temperatures can get as high as 120 degrees F. Always carry plenty of water, wear a hat and sunscreen, share your itinerary, know your limits and wear sturdy hiking shoes. Plan ahead. Be safe!