

Off the Beaten Path Hikes

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Petrified Forest National Park

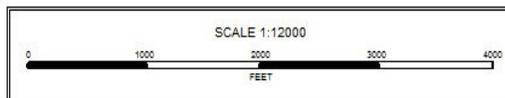
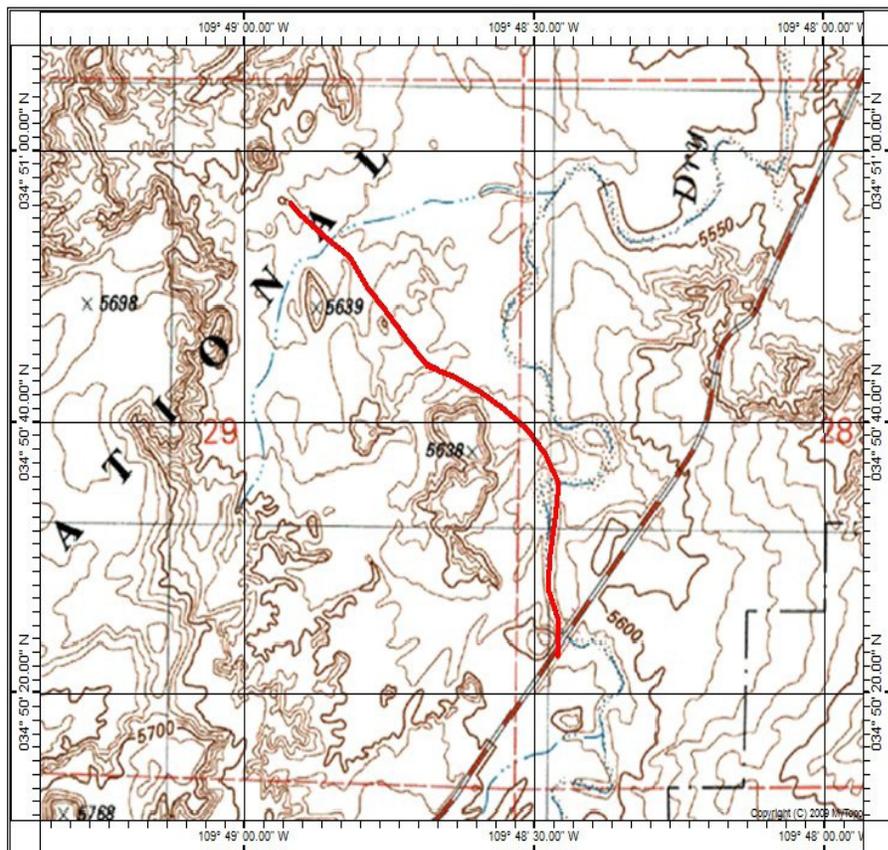


View of Martha's Butte on right and hill with Walker's Stump on left

Martha's Butte

This one mile (1.6 km) hike takes you to a petroglyph site at the base of a feature called Martha's Butte. There is a solar marker here which appears sliced in half by the summer solstice sunrise. Other petroglyphs are also on boulders in the area. The origin of the name Martha's Butte or who Martha was is unknown.

Park at the Dry Wash bridge just south of milepost 22 on the main park road – there is a small, unimproved place to park on the south side of the wash, off the northbound lane. The hike starts out heading north in Dry Wash – as the wash bends sharply east, exit the drainage and head northwest around the north side of the formation to your west.



Enjoy your hike safely and protect the park

You will be walking up and down through small drainages as you continue northwest to the relatively small butte with petroglyphs and at the base of the next set of bluffs.

If you go to the smaller hill south of Martha's Butte, you will see a large petrified log embedded in the clay hill. This was long thought to be a petrified stump still in place but was excavated in 1936 by park naturalist Myrl V. Walker and some CCC "boys", revealing that it is actually a log portion at a steep angle. This log section is now known as "Walker's Stump".

Please respect the visitors who follow you and leave all petrified wood and artifacts in place. Be careful not to touch the petroglyphs. Oils on your hands can cause damage.

This walk, although not difficult or steep, does require sturdy shoes. The footing can be difficult at any time. Do not attempt this hike if lightning is in the area. Please take normal hiking precautions and bring food and water, sun protection, and navigation aids. Pack out whatever you packed in.



Martha's Butte petroglyphs



Close up of solar marker event during the summer solstice



Walker's Stump