



# Saguaro Sentinel

## Heading for 100: The Park Service and A Saguaro

### TWO SEEDS ARE PLANTED

1916. In the Sonoran Desert, far to the east of the sleepy village of Tucson, a saguaro cactus seed fell to the ground under a palo verde tree. Perhaps it slipped from the beak of a gila woodpecker, or arrived in the droppings of a nectar-feeding bat. Before the seed could dry up, two rainstorms swept the desert within five days. Thus a saguaro cactus was born in the shade of a nurse tree.

Meanwhile on the East Coast, in the busy city of Washington, D.C., another seed was planted when Congress passed and President Wilson signed the *National Park Service Act*. This new law provided an agency to oversee 37 parks and monuments scattered from Maine to Hawaii. Now there would be a cadre of rangers and a visionary director -- Stephen Mather -- to care for and develop these national treasures.

### GROWING UP

These two birthdays became entwined in 1933. In March of that year a group of Tucson citizens convinced outgoing President Herbert Hoover to proclaim Saguaro National Monument, including the home of that young saguaro cactus, now about ten inches high.

At first, the new monument was administered by the U.S. Forest Service, but a new Parks director, Horace Albright, appealed to incoming President Franklin Roosevelt to transfer all National Monuments and a grand collection of historic areas to Park Service care in August of 1933. This created the system of parklands that we know today.

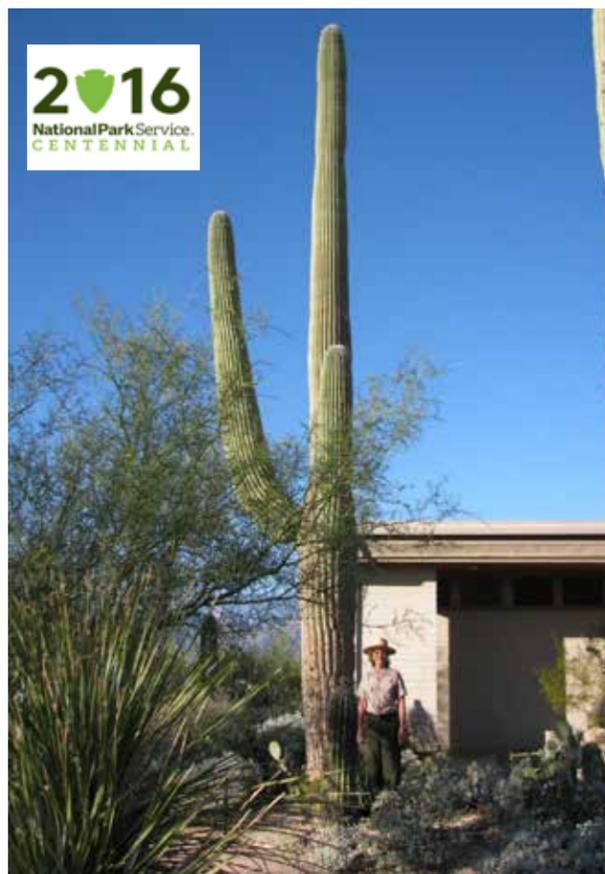
### CHANGE, GROWTH, AND THE FUTURE

1966. The saguaro, now fifteen feet tall, was carefully transplanted at the Monument's *Rincon Mountain District* visitor center (a *Tucson Mountain District* 35 miles to the west was added in 1961.) At the same time, the Park Service celebrated its 50th anniversary with a program of improvements to facilities called *Mission 66*. Visitors found new exhibits inside and a centerpiece "Anniversary Saguaro" outside.

As we approach the passage of another 50 years, the saguaro, its surroundings, and the system have all grown. Stop by to see the saguaro today. Then enjoy 140 square miles of Saguaro National *Park* (re-named in 1994,) east and west. And join with us all around the country to celebrate 100 years of your National Park Service, preserving the natural and cultural heritage of America in over 400 sites, and in scores of regional and local projects. *Join the celebration -- Find Your Park!*



A saguaro growing outside the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center was designated the Anniversary Saguaro in 1966 as the Park Service, and the cactus, turned 50 years old. NPS file photo.



The Anniversary Saguaro as it looks today, with the Park's Superintendent Darla Sidles. This cactus has grown three arms and about twenty feet in the past fifty years. NPS photo.

### PREPARING FOR THE PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL!

Welcome to Saguaro National Park! You are visiting during a very special time for us and the entire National Park Service (NPS). From Acadia National Park to Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site; from Yellowstone National Park to César E. Chávez National Monument, we are joining over 400 National Park units across the country to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the NPS in 2016...and we're starting now!

The park and the entire Tucson area have changed dramatically over the last 100 years. Can you predict what this area will look like in 2116? Will the next generation still care about national parks and wilderness areas? What impacts will climate change have on the American west's iconic saguaro cactus, the namesake of this park? Will these places be valued enough to ensure the continued protection of our precious natural and cultural resources?

The goal of the National Park Service Centennial in 2016 is to "connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates". Over the next few years, we will be looking to engage more youth, find greater connections to the increasingly-urban community of Tucson, and raise the visibility of the park. We want to engage new stewards that will help care for and protect this place for generations to come.

Be on the lookout for special Centennial activities and events that will celebrate our last 100 years and prepare us for the next 100 years. Ask park staff and volunteers how you can help—there are many different opportunities! You can volunteer, help get youth engaged, participate in park events, assist in raising the visibility of the park, or contribute financially. Check out our website at [www.nps.gov/sagu](http://www.nps.gov/sagu), and our Facebook page for updates. Our future depends on YOU! Thanks for your support, and for visiting Saguaro National Park.

Darla Sidles  
Superintendent

(By the way, we pronounce it: "sah-WAH-row.")

### Take a Hike pg 3

Are you visiting us for an hour or for a couple of days? Are you with small children or a super-athlete ready to test your endurance? No matter what your skill or fitness level, we can suggest an adventure for you.

Use this hiking guide as your starting place, but we always encourage you to check the most recent trail conditions with our staff at the visitor centers.

### Explore RMD pg 4

Take some time to explore the Rincon Mountain District on the east side of Tucson. There is a map and some helpful advice about how to make the best use of your time during your visit.

Drive the scenic Cactus Forest Loop. Hike among the saguaros or up toward the pines. You can even ride a mountain bike to an historic ranching site.

### Discover TMD pg 6

Discovering the Tucson Mountain District on the west side of Tucson is easy with a little help from this guide.

Drive or hike a scenic trail. Climb a hill to see one of the most popular petroglyph sites in southern Arizona. Enjoy a sunset behind the iconic silhouette of our namesake saguaro cactus. There are many ways to experience this amazing place.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

### Saguaro National Park

Saguaro National Park preserves and protects thousands of acres of Sonoran Desert wilderness, offering recreation, learning, and spiritual renewal in the backyard of a growing metropolitan city.

### Superintendent

Darla Sidles

### Headquarters Address

#### Rincon Mountain District (East)

Saguaro National Park  
3693 South Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85730  
(520) 733-5153

#### Tucson Mountain District (West)

2700 N. Kinney Road  
Tucson, AZ 85743  
(520) 733-5158

### Park Information

(520) 733-5100

### Fax

(520) 733-5183

### E-mail

SAGU\_Information@nps.gov

### Website

www.nps.gov/sagu

### Education Coordinator

Chip\_Littlefield@nps.gov  
(520) 733-5157

### Volunteer Coordinator

Richard\_Hill@nps.gov  
(520) 733-5156

### Community Outreach Coordinator

Esther\_Rivera@nps.gov  
(520) 733-8613

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



Find us on Facebook as  
SaguaroNationalPark

# The Other Side of Saguaro...

Welcome to Saguaro National Park, where you will find one park with two districts found east and west of Tucson. While they are both Saguaro National Park and they were both set aside primarily to protect saguaro cacti, they are very different places for you to enjoy.

### WHY TWO DISTRICTS?

What is now known as Saguaro National Park was first established as a national monument in 1933. Homer Shantz from the University of Arizona worked to preserve a remarkable stand of saguaro cacti on the east side of town and the result of his efforts became the Rincon Mountain District (RMD).

In the 1960s, researchers noticed a decline in the number of cacti in the Rincon's cactus forest and worked together to add another remarkable stand of cacti found on the western side of Tucson to the park. This western area is now known as the Tucson Mountain District (TMD) of Saguaro National Park.

### TUCSON MOUNTAIN DISTRICT

(TMD) is located on the west side of town, just northwest of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, another popular destination for Tucson visitors. Seeing both together in one day is common, though it makes for a very long day. Save some time to really slow down and enjoy TMD. There are hikes for people of all abilities, awe inspiring stands of cacti, and a brilliant view of the western sky from sunset to star rise. The historic CCC-built picnic areas are marvelous places to stop for a snack before hitting the trail, and Signal Hill picnic area is the starting place to marvel at ancient petroglyphs found on Signal Hill. A 5-mile scenic loop drive leads to many of these sites.

### THE RINCON MOUNTAIN DISTRICT

(RMD) has an 8-mile loop drive worth writing home about. This winding scenic road takes visitors through the historic cactus forest, where there are signs of significant recovery of the cactus population for anyone who takes

the time to look for them. This road is also a popular biking destination, not for the faint of heart. North of the visitor center is a network of trails that wind all over the cactus forest. It is easy to plan a hike that will last an hour or a day. If you want to plan a hike for more than one day, RMD is your district. There are 6 different back country campgrounds, the only camping in the park, that vary from grasslands with juniper trees at 4,800' in elevation to the pine and fir forests above 8,000'. RMD protects the western and southern slopes of the Rincon Mountains.

### THE WHOLE PARK

What the two districts do well together is serve our visitors. During the months of December through March, you will find scheduled programs several times each day. During our warm springs and hot summers, there is still something happening each day in the visitor centers of both districts. Interpretive programs, guided hikes and Jr. Ranger programs are designed to help visitors make their own meaningful memories of their adventures in Saguaro National Park.

Travel time between the two districts is approximately one hour. We hope you save time on your trip to drive to the other side of town to see the other side of Saguaro National Park.

### Directions

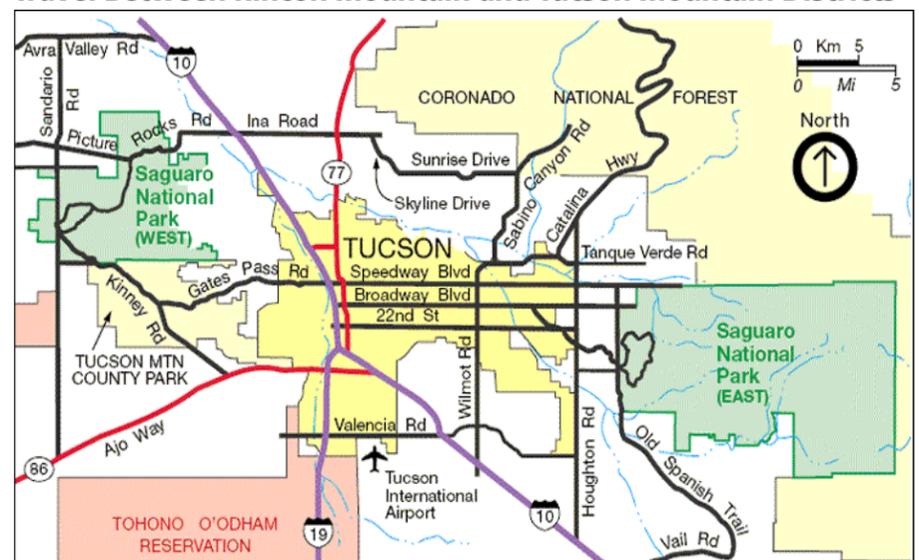
**To Rincon Mountain District (East)**  
**From the Tucson Mountain District,** head southeast on Kinney Road, to Gates Pass Road. Turn left and go up and over the pass. **Caution - large vehicles are not permitted over Gates Pass, see below for an alternate route.** Gates Pass Road becomes Speedway Boulevard. Continue east on Speedway for 14 miles through the city to Freeman Road. Turn right (south) 3.6 miles to Old Spanish Trail. Turn left (east) following the signs .25 miles.

**To Tucson Mountain District (West)**  
**From the Rincon Mountain District,** head northwest on Old Spanish Trail to Harrison Road. Turn right and follow Harrison to Speedway Boulevard. Head west on Speedway for 14 miles. This will become Gates Pass Road. **Caution - large vehicles are not permitted over Gates Pass, see below for an alternate route.** Continue 4.6 miles west through the Tucson Mountains to Kinney Road. Turn right (northwest) and follow Kinney Road 3.7 miles past the Desert Museum to the park entrance. Go 1 mile to the visitor center.

### Over-sized Vehicles (West)

**Vehicles exceeding 12,000 pounds GVWR** are prohibited on Gates Pass Road and Picture Rocks Road through the park. Instead, use I-10 to I-19 (exit 260) south. From I-19 take Ajo Way/State Route 86 (exit 99) west 4.8 miles to Kinney Road. Turn right (north) 10 miles (past Old Tucson Studios and the Desert Museum) to the visitor center. Going to Rincon Mountain District, take I-10 to Houghton Road north. At Escalante Road turn east and follow the signs.

### Travel Between Rincon Mountain and Tucson Mountain Districts



## Plan Your Visit

**In Case of an Emergency, call 911, then contact a ranger.**  
**If you see crimes against resources call 1-800-637-9152.**

### Dates and Hours of Operation

Both district scenic drives are open daily from sunrise to sunset. Visitor centers are open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily, year-round, except December 25.

### Entrance Fees

Private vehicles and motorcycles.....	\$10.00	Valid for 7 days
Bicyclists and pedestrians.....	\$ 5.00	Valid for 7 days
Saguaro Annual Pass .....	\$25.00*	Valid for 1 year
Interagency Annual Pass.....	\$80.00	Valid for 1 year
Interagency Senior Pass (U.S. resident, 62 or older).....	\$10.00	Valid for a lifetime
Interagency Access Pass (U.S. resident, disabled).....	Free	Valid for a lifetime
Interagency Active Military Pass.....	Free	Valid for 1 year
<small>(Active U.S. Military and Dependents)</small>		

\* Subject to change.

**Pets** are welcome on all roads accessible to the public, picnic areas (other than Mam-A-Gah), and paved trails. For the safety of your pet, they must remain leashed at all times. Do not leave pets unattended in a vehicle. Even when outside temperatures are cool, car temperatures can quickly rise to dangerous levels. Watch carefully for snakes or other wildlife on roadways. Carry a comb and tweezers to remove cactus spines from paws and noses. Pavement can get very hot in the afternoons and can burn paws. **Pets are not permitted on unpaved trails.** Visitor Center staff can suggest nearby areas for hiking with pets.

2 Saguaro Sentinel

**Camping** is not available in Saguaro National Park. Consider Gilbert Ray Campground on Kinney Road inside Tucson Mountain Park when visiting Tucson Mountain District. Colossal Cave Mountain Park or other commercial campgrounds are near the Rincon Mountain District. The park website has a list of public campgrounds. *Backcountry camping is available with a permit from the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center: see "Hiking in the High Country" on pg. 5.*

**Hiking** is permitted on more than 150 miles of designated trails. Off-trail hiking is **only** permitted in areas above 4,500' elevation. Purchase topographic maps at Visitor Centers.

**Food and Lodging** are not available inside the park. Tucson has many restaurants, grocery stores and opportunities for lodging near both districts.

### Fires are permitted in grills

Grills are provided at most picnic areas in the park. Do not collect or burn any wood from inside the park. Please be responsible; do not leave fires unattended and ensure the fire is completely out cold before departing the area.

**Group Picnic** areas are available in both districts. The Javelina Picnic Area ramada (no tables) in Rincon Mountain District (RMD - East) is the only group site available to be reserved. All other picnic grounds are first-come, first-served.

**Special Use Permits** are available for special events or commercial activities inside the park. Contact (520) 733-5116 for additional information.

Travel Information

# Take a Hike in the Park

## Tucson Mountain District Hiking Trails

### Trail Description, Map on Page 6

*Times and distances are roundtrip.*

- 1 Desert Discovery Trail** *easy*  
You will find the trailhead to this self-guided nature walk on Kinney Road, one mile northwest of the Red Hills Visitor Center. Here you can familiarize yourself with the native plants, animals and ecology of the Sonoran Desert. An audio tour for the visually impaired is available at the visitor center. Trail has frequent benches, and is paved and wheelchair accessible.  
*.5 mile/.8 km no elevation gain*  
**20 minutes**
- 
- 2 Valley View Overlook** *easy to moderate*  
This trail was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. The trailhead is located 1.34 miles along the Bajada Loop Drive. While hiking this trail, you will cross two washes and then gradually ascend stone steps to a ridge. The view from the ridge includes Avra Valley sprawled below and Picacho Peak to the north.  
*.8 mile/1.3 km 100 ft./30 m. elevation gain*  
**45 minutes**
- 
- 3 Signal Hill Trail** *easy*  
This short climb takes you to dozens of ancient petroglyphs more than 800 years old. The trail starts from the Signal Hill Picnic Area located off Golden Gate Road, at 3.3 miles along the Loop Drive. The trail climbs numerous stone steps, some of which have a large rise, through a wash and up a hill. For some, climbing these steps may be difficult.  
*.3 mile/.8 km approx. 30 ft./9 m. elevation gain*  
**20 minutes**
- 
- 4 King Canyon Trail** *moderate/strenuous*  
The trailhead and parking area for this hike is directly across the road from the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. From the Red Hills visitor center, travel two miles southeast on Kinney Road. The first section of the trail follows an old roadway constructed by the CCC in the 1930s. At .9 mile hikers pass the Sendero Esperanza trail junction at the Mam-A-Gah picnic area. The next 1.9 miles climbs to the Sweetwater Trail junction. The final .9 mile ascends a series of steep switchbacks to the Hugh Norris Trail. From here, continue .3 mile to reach the top of Wasson Peak, elevation 4,687 feet.  
*7 miles/11.3 km 1839 ft./561 m. elevation gain*  
**4-5 hours**
- 
- 5 Sendero Esperanza Trail** *moderate*  
This trail begins 1.2 miles from the intersection of Golden Gate and Hohokam Roads, across from the Ez-Kim-In-Zin picnic area. The trail's first mile follows the sandy path of an old mine road. The next .7 mile climbs a series of steep switchbacks to the top of a scenic ridge, where it intersects the Hugh Norris Trail. The trail then descends 1.4 miles to the south, past the Gould Mine Trail junction, where it meets the King Canyon trail.  
*6.2 miles/10 km 700 ft./213 m. elevation gain*  
**3-4 hours**
- 
- 6 Hugh Norris Trail** *strenuous*  
This is the longest trail in the Tucson Mountain District. The trailhead is .8 mile from the start of the Bajada Loop Drive. The trail begins with a series of switchbacks that climb to a ridge overlooking the cactus forest. From there, the trail follows the ridge-top through areas with unique welded tuff rock formations until it reaches Amole Peak, approximately 4.1 miles from the trailhead. From here, continue .8 mile up a series of switchbacks to the top of Wasson Peak, the highest point in the Tucson Mountains.  
*10 miles/16 km 2087 ft./636 m. elevation gain*  
**5-6 hours**
- 
- 7 8 Scenic Loop and Belmont Area Trails**  
There is limited access and parking in these areas. Please contact the visitor center or visit the website for detailed information about where to park to access these areas.



Tucson Mountain District, looking up towards Wasson Peak - Bill Megna

## Rincon Mountain District Hiking Trails

### Trail Description, Map on pages 4 and 5

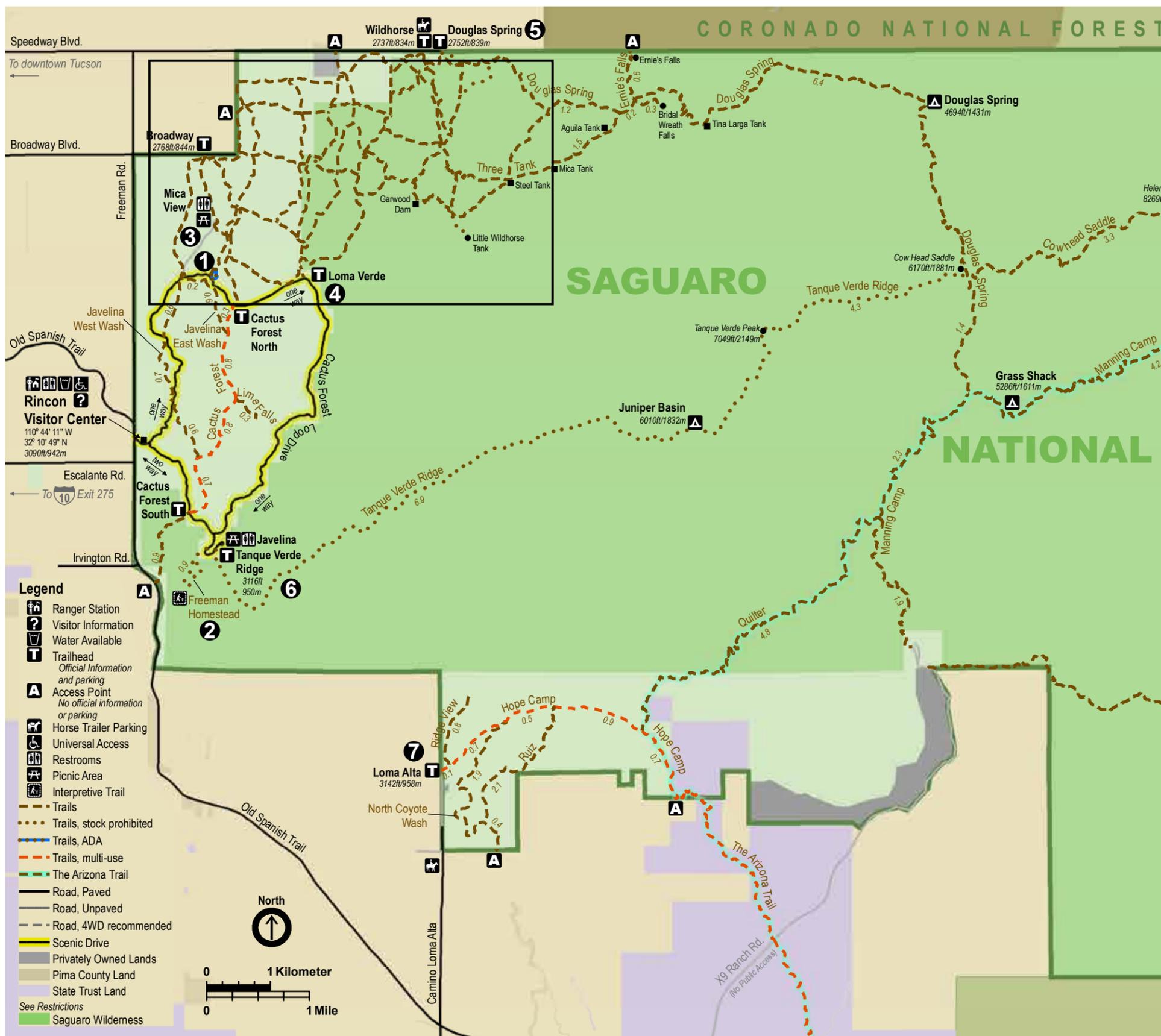
*Times and distances are roundtrip.*

- 1 Desert Ecology Trail** *easy*  
This trail offers an introduction to the rugged climate of the Sonoran Desert and the adaptations that allow plants and animals to thrive here. An easy and pleasant way to take a break from your automobile tour. Trail has interpretive signs, frequent benches, and is paved and wheelchair accessible.  
*.25 mile/.4 km no elevation gain*  
**20 minutes**
- 
- 2 Freeman Homestead Trail** *easy to moderate*  
A scenic and historic path to the site of an early desert homestead. Full color interpretive signs along the trail explain the various aspects of human and animal lives in this rugged "Home in the Desert." The unpaved trail has wide rock stairways on some moderate grades.  
*1 mile/1.6 km 100 ft./30 m. elevation gain*  
**1 hour**
- 
- 3 Mica View Picnic Area "Loop"** *easy*  
Begin this walk through a natural desert garden at the Mica View Picnic Area, off the Cactus Forest Loop Drive. The route follows the Mica View Trail north or south, connecting with the Cactus Forest Trail for the return trip. Use the trail map in this paper to follow the trails in this area. This is the easiest loop in this trail system; it may also be reached from the trailhead at the east end of Broadway Boulevard.  
*2 miles/3.2 km no elevation gain*  
**1 hour**
- 
- 4 Loma Verde "Loop"** *easy*  
A scenic introduction to the Cactus Forest trail system. Begin at the Loma Verde trailhead on the Cactus Forest Drive. Follow the Loma Verde Trail past the site of a failed copper mine. From the Pink Hill Trail take the short spur to the hilltop overlook for a spectacular view of the cactus forest. Continue following the Pink Hill Trail to Squeeze Pen Trail, and turn right. This trail will take you along the base of the Rincon Mountains, back to Loma Verde Trail. Turn left to return to your car. Easy grades on unpaved trails.  
*3.4 miles/5.5 km 70 ft./21 m. elevation gain*  
**2 hours**
- 
- 5 Douglas Spring Trail to Bridal Wreath Falls** *strenuous*  
This trail begins at the Douglas Spring Trailhead at the east end of Speedway Boulevard. This trip into the foothills of the Rincons provides good views of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Along the way seasonal water courses add interest to the scenery, which changes from saguaro stands to desert grasslands. Bridal Wreath Falls is a good lunchtime destination: the amount of water varies from a trickle to a torrent, depending on season and drought conditions. Steep and rocky.  
*5.6 miles/9 km 1100 ft./335 m. elevation gain*  
**3-4 hours**
- 
- 6 Tanque Verde Ridge Trail** *strenuous*  
For the visitor looking for a more rugged trail, the Tanque Verde Ridge Trail is ideal. Day hikers may climb as high as time allows, remembering to return to their cars by sunset to exit the park before the road closes. Magnificent views of the Tucson Basin and Rincon Peak are the reward. This trail is also the closest access to the backcountry from the Visitor Center. Very steep and rocky.  
Camping only at Juniper Basin, permit required.  
*18 mi./29 km to peak*  
*14 mi./22.5 km to Juniper Basin 4000 ft./1219 m. elevation gain*  
**time varies according to destination**
- 
- 7 Hope Camp Trail** *moderate*  
This trail heads east from the Loma Alta Trailhead, following a riparian, or streamside, area. It offers views of Tanque Verde Ridge and Rincon Peak. This trail passes two abandoned line camps with windmills, water towers and storage tanks. (This trail connects to the Arizona Trail via the Quilter Connection trail. It also connects with Ruiz and Coyote Wash Trails.)  
*5.6 miles/9 km 300 ft./90 m. elevation gain*  
**3-4 hours**

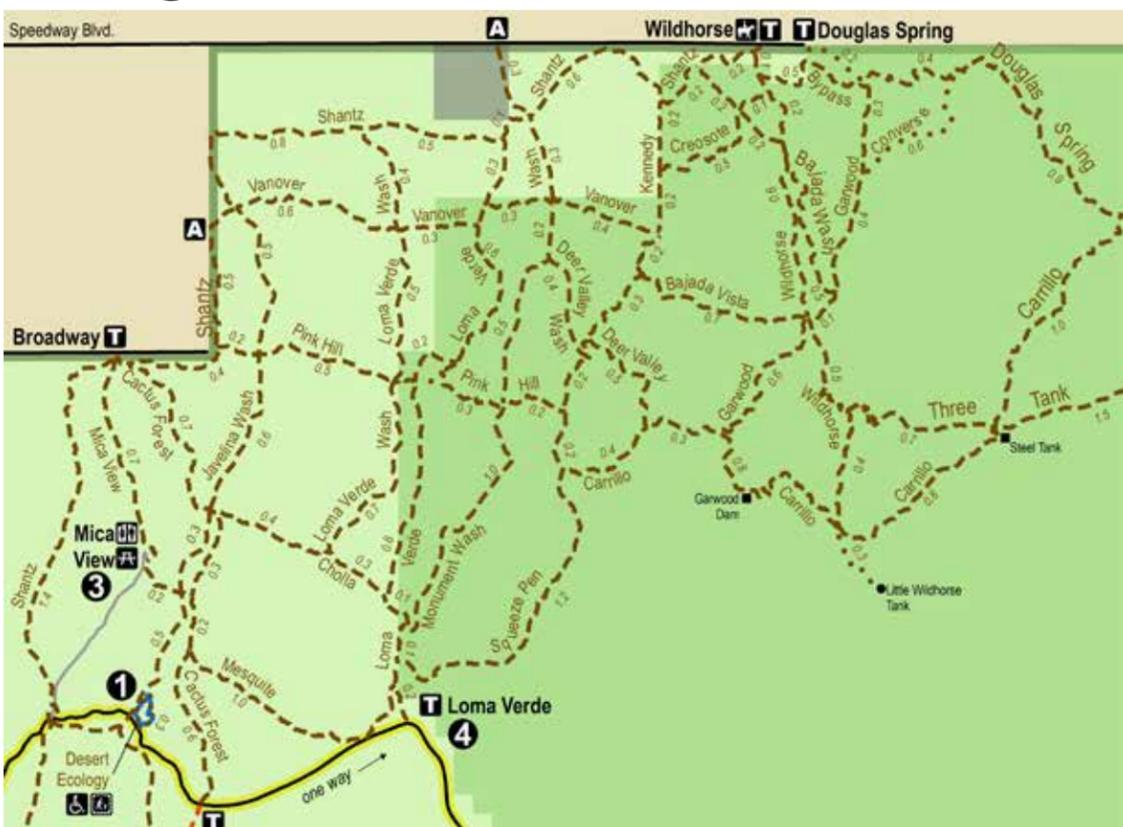


Rincon Mountain District, along the Cactus Forest Drive - NPS photo

# Explore the Rincon Mountain District (East)



## Hiking in the Cactus Forest



The Cactus Forest has many trails available to hikers and horseback riders.

### Hiking

There are many trails with multiple combinations in the Cactus Forest. It is easy to plan a hike lasting an hour or a whole day. Stop into the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center for trip recommendations and additional maps.

Carry plenty of water. On hot days, one gallon or more per person is a necessity. Use sunscreen, wear a hat and sturdy footwear. Tell someone your plans and when you expect to be back.

### Hiking Restrictions

- Hiking groups are limited to a maximum of 18 persons on trails and 6 people if off-trail.
- Hiking off-trail in the Cactus Forest and Rincon Valley is prohibited. Hiking off-trail is permitted above 4,500 feet.
- Overnight camping is not permitted in the Cactus Forest.



Hiking in the Cactus Forest is an excellent way to get up close and personal with saguaro cacti - NPS Photo, B. Riley



## Cactus Forest Loop Drive

### Driving the Loop

The Cactus Forest Scenic Loop Drive, highlighted in yellow on the map, in the Rincon Mountain District is a paved, combination one and two-way road. The 8-mile (12.9 km) Loop Drive features several trailheads, scenic vistas and pullouts. Trailers longer than 35 feet or any vehicle wider than 8 feet are not permitted.



— 35 Feet —



— 8 Feet —

### Restrictions

#### Biking

Always maintain a safe speed for road conditions and your own riding experience. The Loop Drive is narrow with many tight turns and steep hills. **Use extra caution when approaching the first steep downhill after passing the entrance station!** Bicyclists must obey all posted speed limits and give right of way to all pedestrians. Watch for slow moving cars or cars stopped in the roadway.

#### Mountain Biking

Trail riding is permitted on the 2.5 mile (4.0 km) multi-use portion of the Cactus Forest Trail inside the Cactus Forest Loop Drive. The trail may be ridden in either direction, but you may not ride against traffic on the one-way section of the Cactus Forest Loop Drive.

Trail riding is also permitted on the Hope Camp Trail from the Camino Loma Alta Trailhead, but is not permitted on the Quilter Trail, Ruiz or Coyote Wash trails.

#### Multi-use trail

The portion of the Cactus Forest Trail *inside* the Cactus Forest Loop Drive and the Hope Camp Trail are open to horseback riding, bicycling and hiking.



**Stay Alert!** Make your presence known to other trail users well in advance, particularly when approaching from behind. Cyclists yield to all other trail users and hikers yield to equestrians.

#### Stock and Pack Animals

Horseback riding off-trail is prohibited. Livestock is restricted from the Cactus Forest Loop Drive and these trails:

Wildhorse Trail south of the Carrillo Trail
Tanque Verde Ridge Trail
Desert Ecology Trail
Freeman Homestead Trail
Miller Creek Trail
Last half mile of the Rincon Peak Trail
Converse Trail
First quarter mile of the Douglas Springs Trail

**Horse Trailer Parking is available** at Wildhorse Trailhead and .4 mile (.6 km) south of the Loma Alta trailhead near Oro Escondido.

## Hiking in the High Country of the Rincon Mountains

Backpacking in the east district's higher elevations requires special preparation.

### Backpacking and Camping

Overnight camping is permitted, with a backcountry permit, in designated campgrounds in the Rincon Mountain District. Campgrounds are accessible by foot and horseback only. There are six campgrounds located 6 to 12 miles from public access trailheads.

### Backcountry Camping Permits

Backcountry camping permits are available on a first-come first-served basis at the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center. A permit costs \$6.00 (subject to change) per campsite, per night. The maximum number of people allowed per campsite is six. The maximum size of any one group is 18 persons.

Permits must accompany the permittees into the backcountry and be openly displayed. Campground stays are limited to five consecutive days per camp and no more than 10 days in the park, with 10 days between successive permits. Permittees must be at least 16 years of age.

### Water

Backcountry water sources can be unpredictable, especially during a drought. Inquire at the visitor center for current water availability before beginning your trip. All natural water sources must be treated before use.

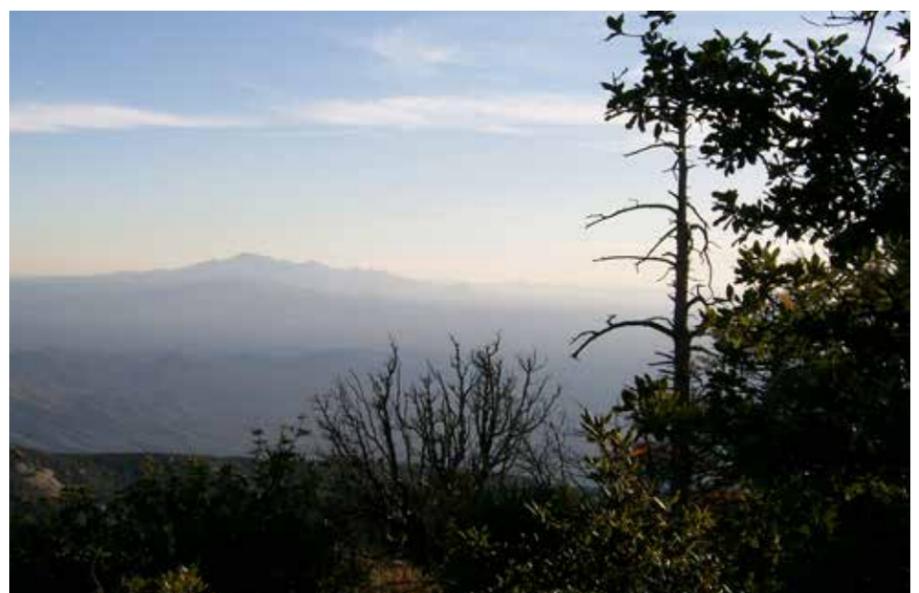
### Bears

The Rincon Mountains have a small population of black bears. Proper food storage, in bear boxes in all six backcountry campgrounds, is **required** for your safety and protection of the bears.

### Backcountry Livestock Use

Stock animals are defined as horses, burros, and mules. All stock are required to stay on designated trails.

In the Rincon Mountain District overnight stock use is permitted at all campgrounds except Juniper Basin.

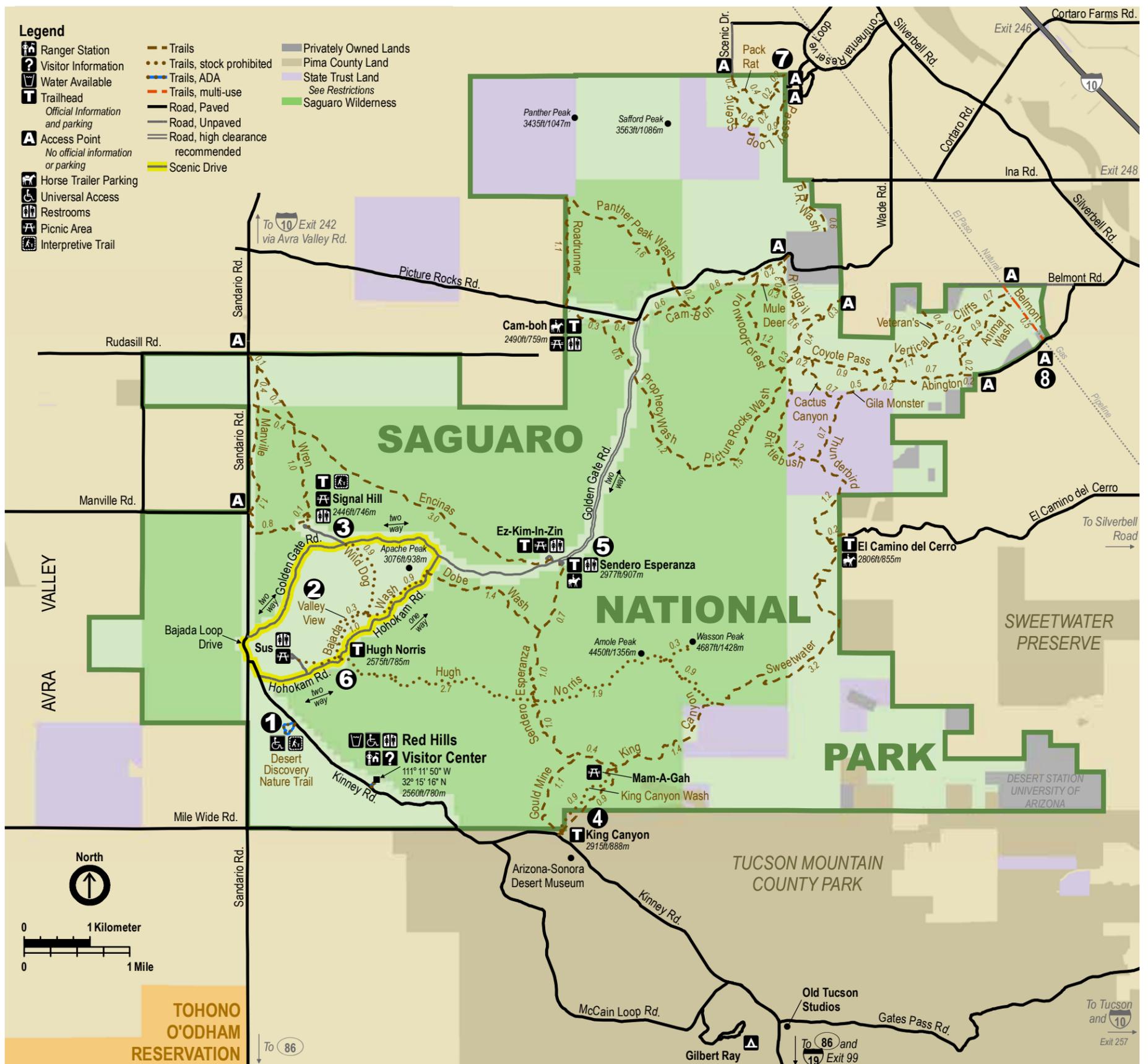


The view is lovely from the top of the Rincon Mountains - NPS Photo, Laura Bolyard

Riders must carry in all horse feed; grazing is not permitted. "Weed-free" feed is recommended to prevent the introduction of invasive species.

**For a permit application, download the Saguro Wilderness Area brochure from [nps.gov/sagu/planyourvisit/brochures.htm](https://nps.gov/sagu/planyourvisit/brochures.htm) or call the RMD VC (520) 733-5153.**

# Discover the Tucson Mountain District (West)



## Scenic Bajada Loop Drive

### Driving the Loop

The west district's Scenic Bajada Loop Drive (shown on map in yellow) is a popular way to explore the Tucson Mountain District's foothills. This unpaved, combination one- and two-way graded dirt road offers scenic pullouts, picnic areas and hiking trailheads in a 5 mile (7.8 km) loop. High clearance or four-wheel drive is not needed.

The Bajada Loop Drive begins at the intersection of Kinney Road and Hohokam Road. Exit the Red Hills Visitor Center, turn right onto Kinney Road, and continue northwest 1.6 miles (2.6 km) to the loop's entrance on the right. The Loop Drive ends where Golden Gate Road meets Sandario Road. To return to the visitor center, turn left onto Sandario Road. Continue 0.2 mile (300 m) to the junction with Kinney Road. Turn left. The visitor center is 2 miles (3.2 km) ahead.

### Bicycles, Mountain Bikes, ORVs & ATVs

Biking is permitted along the Bajada Loop Drive and Golden Gate Road, as well as all paved roads. Bicyclists must obey all posted speed limits and give right of way to all pedestrians. Watch for slow moving cars or cars stopped in the roadway. Biking is not permitted on any trails, except the Belmont Multi-use trail. ORV's and ATV's are allowed **only** on park roads, and **only** if licensed for road travel. For everyone's safety, bicycles should not be ridden on visitor center sidewalks.

## Hiking

The Tucson Mountain District offers more than 40 miles (64 km) of hiking trails. Check at the Red Hills Visitor Center for trail conditions and special notices before you leave.

### Hiking Restrictions

- Off-trail hiking is prohibited in the Tucson Mountain District.
- Hiking groups are limited to a maximum of 18 persons.
- There is no overnight camping permitted in the Tucson Mountain District.

## Restrictions

### Driving Restrictions

Golden Gate Road, north of Sendero Esperanza Trailhead, is recommended only for high clearance vehicles due to the rough condition of the road. Other roads are winding with narrow shoulders. Please use pullouts and parking areas and avoid stopping in roadways. Hohokam and Golden Gate Roads are closed at sunset.

Although maintained for passenger vehicles, Bajada Loop Drive is an unpaved, rough, and narrow road not recommended for motorhomes or oversize vehicles. Wash crossings may cause damage to trailers or RVs. Large vehicles and vehicles pulling trailers should use extra caution if traveling this scenic road.

### State Trust Lands

State trust lands are parcels of land within the park held by the Arizona State Land Department. A State Land Recreational Permit is required to hike in these parcels. For more information and to obtain a permit, call (602) 542-4631 or visit [www.azland.gov](http://www.azland.gov).

### Stock and Pack Animals

Stock groups are limited to 15 animals. Trailer parking is available at Cam-boh, El Camino del Cerro, and Sendero Esperanza trailheads. Stock animals are prohibited from traveling off-trail in the park. **Stock are not permitted on any of the trails listed below:**

Desert Discovery Trail
Hugh Norris Trail
Valley View Overlook Trail
King Canyon Trail, from the Sweetwater Trail junction to the Hugh Norris Trail junction
Bajada Wash Trail, from Valley View Overlook Trail to Sus Picnic Area
Red Hills Visitor Center Area, including the Cactus Garden and Javelina Wash trails
Sus Picnic Area
Signal Hill Picnic Area
Wild Dog Trail

# Find Something New on Your Next Park Visit!

Installation of **brand new exhibits** at the Rincon Mountain District (Saguaro East) was completed in November 2014. The centerpiece of the new space is a life size, touchable model of a saguaro cactus -- look inside and discover the workings of this desert wonder!

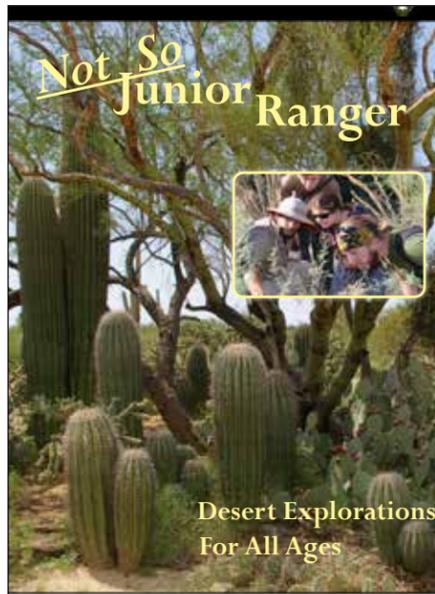
Fundraising for this project started many years ago. Your fee dollars were saved and there was a generous match by **Friends of Saguaro National Park** to complete the project. **Western National Parks Association** also will be upgrading the sales area to match the new exhibits with themed books and collectibles.

At the Tucson Mountain District **new video components** have been prepared for the desert diorama. These specially-designed films will take you out into the Park for views of desert life as seen from several different perspectives, bringing new meaning to the indoor display.

And, available now at both park districts, is the new **Not So Junior Ranger Program**. Designed with older visitors and families in mind, this full-color workbook takes you out into the park for trail experiences and citizen science activities. Thanks to the IBM retiree volunteer program for funding!



Peek into a saguaro among the new hands-on exhibits at the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center, then head out into the park to do the fun activities in the Not So Junior Ranger booklet.



Trails in Saguaro National Park are maintained by our Trail Crew, and projects are funded from fee dollars. Here the crew is rigging equipment to move large rocks out of the trail.

## Your Fee Dollars at Work

Have you enjoyed a picnic in the shade of a historic shelter at Signal Hill? Have you learned about the natural and human history of the saguaro from signs along the Freeman Homestead trail? Are you better informed by the new trailhead exhibits and maps found throughout Saguaro National Park? If so, you are enjoying facilities provided by park entrance fees, paid by you and other visitors to Saguaro National Park.

Projects paid for by fee dollars at Saguaro cover a wide range of visitor needs. For instance, a major re-route of the Carillo Trail in the Rincon Mountain foothills was completed this year. The new trail provides a highly scenic

pathway, easier grades, and replaces badly eroded sections threatening park resources. Other recent improvements include updates to the Tucson Mountain District's audio/visual equipment for the popular 'Voices of a Desert' program, and new exhibits for the Rincon Mountain visitor center (story at left.)

Your fee dollars make these important upgrades possible. Whether you purchase a seven-day permit to the park, a Saguaro Annual Pass good for one year's worth of visits, or the Interagency Pass to be used anywhere in the USA, you can be happy knowing that your fee dollars are used for projects directly related to the facilities and resources of your Saguaro National Park.

## You Can Be a Friend to Saguaro National Park...

The **Friends of Saguaro National Park**, a top-rated, great non-profit organization, funds critical projects at Saguaro National Park. Your contribution helps assure that the same incredible park experience will be enjoyed by future generations.

**Friends of Saguaro** has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars for exhibits, trail construction, picnic tables and benches, educational materials, and safety equipment. They also fund important research projects on saguaros, Gila monsters, wild cats, and other wildlife, including the popular wildlife camera project.

The **Friends** have provided long term support for the innovative 'Teacher to Ranger to Teacher' program, reaching thousands of under-served students. Major financial support is now being given for the new exhibits in the Rincon Mountain Visitor Center.

Join us, and give something back to these stunning "sentinels of the desert". Call (520)733-8610, visit us online at [www.friendsofsaguaro.org](http://www.friendsofsaguaro.org), or find us on [facebook.com/friendsofsaguaro](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofsaguaro) to learn more.



We help make the Saguaro National Park experience possible for everyone.

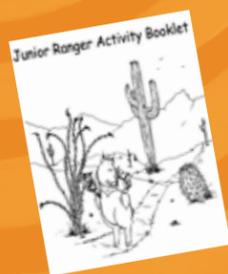
Your support allows us to do it.

Shop in the park stores, become a member, or donate today!

Western National Parks Association is a nonprofit partner of Saguaro National Park. We operate the park's visitor center stores.

[www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org)  
(520) 733-5159

Every purchase, membership, and donation allows us to produce publications, develop educational programs, and fund research projects that make Saguaro National Park meaningful for all visitors.



WNPA provides workbooks for Saguaro's Junior Ranger Program!

Recognize the background image? This design is known as the I'toi Ki or "Elder Brother's House" by the Tohono O'odham tribe of Southern Arizona.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Saguaro National Park  
3693 S. Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85730



Western National Parks Association  
12880 North Vistoso Village Drive  
Tucson, AZ 85755

## Average Temperature and Sunrise / Sunset Times

Average Maximum and Minimum Monthly Temperature												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max	64° F	68° F	72° F	81° F	89° F	99° F	98° F	97° F	94° F	84° F	73° F	65° F
Min	38° F	40° F	44° F	50° F	57° F	67° F	74° F	72° F	67° F	57° F	45° F	39° F

Sunrise and Sunset Times for Tucson, AZ (Mountain Standard Time, GMT-7)												
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1st	7:25/5:30	7:17/5:57	6:51/6:21	6:12/6:43	5:38/7:04	5:18/7:25	5:21/7:34	5:39/7:21	5:59/6:49	6:18/6:10	6:41/5:35	7:07/5:19
5th	7:25/5:33	7:14/6:00	6:46/6:24	6:07/6:46	5:35/7:07	5:17/7:27	5:23/7:34	5:42/7:18	6:01/6:44	6:20/6:05	6:44/5:31	7:10/5:19
10th	7:25/5:37	7:10/6:05	6:40/6:28	6:02/6:48	5:30/7:10	5:17/7:29	5:25/7:33	5:45/7:13	6:05/6:37	6:24/5:58	6:48/5:28	7:14/5:19
15th	7:25/5:41	7:06/6:09	6:34/6:31	5:55/6:53	5:26/7:14	5:17/7:31	5:28/7:31	5:48/7:08	6:08/6:31	6:27/5:52	6:53/5:24	7:17/5:21
20th	7:23/5:46	7:01/6:13	6:27/6:35	5:49/6:56	5:23/7:17	5:18/7:33	5:31/7:29	5:51/7:03	6:11/6:24	6:31/5:47	6:57/5:22	7:20/5:23
25th	7:21/5:50	6:55/6:18	6:21/6:38	5:40/7:00	5:21/7:21	5:19/7:34	5:34/7:26	5:55/6:57	6:14/6:17	6:35/5:41	7:02/5:20	7:22/5:25
30th	7:10/5:55		6:14/6:42	5:39/7:03	5:19/7:24	5:21/7:34	5:38/7:23	5:58/6:51	6:17/6:11	6:39/5:36	7:06/5:19	7:24/5:28

Arizona, except for the Navajo Nation, does not observe Daylight Savings Time. Please note that sunrise and sunset times are approximate and will vary slightly from year to year.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™  
Find Your Park

## Safety in the Park *In Case of an Emergency, call 911*

### Snakes

Six species of rattlesnakes are found at Saguaro National Park. **Avoid placing your hands or feet in hidden areas.** They seek shelter in the shade of bushes or rock crevices in the heat of the day. **Treatment:** If you are bitten by a snake, remain calm. Immobilize the limb and get to a doctor as soon as possible. Report any bites to a ranger.

### Bees

Africanized honey bees ("killer" bees) are found throughout the park. These bees will attack only when they feel their hive is threatened. Stay alert for sounds of bee activity and watch for them entering or exiting a colony. **Near a colony, individual bees may "bump" you, without stinging, as warning.** If you are attacked, run away as fast as you can. If possible, cover your head and face with clothing. Africanized bees will usually cease attacking once you are ¼ to ½ mile away from their hive. **Treatment:** If you are stung, scrape away embedded stingers with your fingernail or a credit card. Call 911 and get to a doctor as soon as you can. Report any incident to a ranger.

### Heat

Hike within your ability and rest often when hiking in the heat. Know the symptoms and treatment for heat exhaustion, and life-threatening heat stroke.

**Heat exhaustion:** This is the result of dehydration due to intense sweating.

**Symptoms:** pale face, nausea, cool and moist skin, headache, and cramps. **Treatment:** drink water, eat high-energy foods, rest in the shade, and cool the body, especially around the neck, head and groin. **Heat stroke:** If left untreated, heat exhaustion can turn into heat stroke. This is a life-threatening emergency

where the body's heat-regulating mechanisms become overwhelmed. **Symptoms:** flushed face, dry skin, weak and rapid pulse, high body temperature, poor judgment or confusion, unconsciousness. **Treatment:** find shade, cool the victim with water, call 911 and seek help immediately.

### Water

**There is no bottled water available in Saguaro National Park.** There are bottle filling stations at each visitor center and the bike ramada in RMD. Please bring your own reusable container or consider purchasing one from the bookstore. Help us "Go Green," reduce our waste stream and re-use your bottles.

During the summer, drink at least one gallon of water per person, per day, even if you don't feel thirsty. In the winter, carry at least two quarts per day. Don't ration your water when hiking—turn back when half your supply is gone.

In the back country, all natural water sources should be treated before use.

### Flooding

During the summer rainy season, the desert is prone to flash flooding. Avoid hiking in washes (dry riverbeds) during thunderstorms. Do not try to cross a flooded road in your vehicle under any circumstances!

### Lightning

Be prepared for rain even on sunny days. If you see lightning, move quickly to the nearest safe place. Avoid hill tops, ridges, and flat open areas. If you can't find shelter, do the "lightning crouch": put your feet together, squat low, tuck your head, and cover your ears.

### Cacti

Many desert plants are spiny or thorny. Some species of cactus, such as cholla, have barbed spines which detach easily and embed in skin. Carry a comb and tweezers to flick off cactus segments and remove spines.

### Mountain Lions

Mountain lions, also known as pumas or cougars, are found in both districts of the park. Human-lion encounters are rare, but possible.

### What to do if you encounter a mountain lion:

- Most lions will avoid confrontation. Give the lion a way to escape.
- **Do not run** from a mountain lion. Stand and face it making eye contact.
- Stay calm and speak loudly and firmly.
- Appear as large as you can: raise your arms and open your jacket if you are wearing one. Pick up small children.
- Throw stones or whatever you can reach without crouching or turning your back.
- Fight back if you are attacked.

### Mines

Numerous historic mine sites can be found within the park. Old mine workings can be extremely dangerous due to rockfall, unstable mine shafts, and poisonous gas build up. Stay out of closed mine areas.

### Pets

Do not leave pets unattended in vehicles. Dangerous heat can build up quickly inside a car. Keep all pets on a 6' leash and watch for cactus, snakes or other wildlife on roadways. Pets are not permitted on unpaved trails.

### Drones

The use of unmanned aircraft is prohibited in Saguaro National Park.

The Saguaro Sentinel is published by Saguaro National Park with assistance from Western National Parks Association (WNPA)

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