

Hiking in the Cactus Forest Rincon Mountain District

Visitor Center (520) 733-5153

To Preserve and Protect

Leave all plants, animals, rocks and other natural and historic features undisturbed.

Hiking groups are limited to a maximum of eighteen people.

Off trail hiking or horseback riding is prohibited within the Cactus Forest.

Fires are prohibited in the Cactus Forest area of the park, except for charcoal cooking fires in the Mica View and Javelina Picnic Areas.

Safety Tips

Be prepared! Carry and drink at least one gallon of water per person, per day. Sport drinks and snacks are also strongly recommended.

Dress appropriately for the weather! Long pants and long sleeved shirts are recommended. Always wear a hat and sturdy closed-toe hiking shoes. Apply sunscreen liberally and often.

Wilderness Access

The Tanque Verde Ridge and Douglas Spring Trails are the most commonly used access points into the high-country Saguaro Wilderness Area. **Camping permits are required for all overnight stays within this wilderness area.**

Dispose of trash properly. Trash cans are available at both picnic areas and the visitor center. Recycling bins are also available at the visitor center.

Camping is **not permitted** in the Cactus Forest area of the park shown on this map.

Pets are not allowed on any trail in the park. Leashed pets are allowed on roads and in picnic areas.

Hunting is prohibited in the park.

Be alert while hiking. Watch for cactus and other prickly plants. To avoid negative encounters with wildlife, always maintain a safe distance and treat them with respect. Be especially alert for Africanized bees, rattlesnakes, mountain lions and black bears. Seek wildlife advice at the Visitor Center. Avoid getting lost by carrying a map and staying on established trails at all times.

Permits may be purchased by fax, through the mail or in person at the visitor center. A brochure outlining the rules and regulations for the Saguaro Wilderness Area is available at the Rincon Mountain District visitor center.

Easy Trails Along the Cactus Forest Drive

Desert Ecology Trail (1/4 mile round trip on paved trail)

An easy stroll through the desert beside Javelina Wash. Signs along the way will introduce you to the plants and animals that call the Sonoran Desert “home.” This trail is wheelchair accessible.

Freeman Homestead Trail (1 mile round trip)

Wander down this path to the site of an old homestead, a grove of large saguaros and a cool desert wash. Interpretive signs along the way will take you deeper into the meaning of this “home in the desert.” These signs also feature special exploration activities for youngsters.

Cactus Forest Trail (2.5 mile one way inside loop drive)

For an easy walk, head out on this multi-use trail (hikers, livestock and bicycles) to the lime kilns historic site. Starting from the north trailhead, it is a 2 mile round trip walk; from the south trailhead 3 miles round trip. This 2.5 mile section of trail is the only path within the Cactus Forest designated for bicycle use. Be courteous and share the trail with others.

