

CALIFORNIA DESERT

HIGH DESERT RESOURCE AREA

The High Desert begins at Cajon Summit on Interstate Highway 15 and extends north into the Eureka Valley and Death Valley area and east to Needles and Blythe on the Colorado River. With Barstow as its hub, the High Desert extends about 200 miles wide by 100 miles from top to bottom.

In this vast area are towns, tiny crossroads, remote cabins and surprising examples of the exquisite beauty of the California Desert. There are myriad forms of plant and animal life, both common and rare.

Elevations on the High or Mojave Desert range from about 3,000 feet to 5,000 feet above sea level, in contrast to the Colorado, or low desert of California, where much of the land is near or below sea level.

The High Desert abounds in opportunities for recreational activities and sights to delight the visitor. Hunting, hiking, camping, rockhounding, sightseeing; opportunities for all these and more are present in abundance. This guide is designed to help you enjoy your own "special thing" on the High Desert.

WILDLIFE

There are some 300 different species of wildlife on the desert. As with desert plants, animals have had to adapt to the harsh environment. Most of the high desert's mammals are active only at night or in the twilight hours. You may, however, see an antelope ground squirrel, with his white tail over his back, scurrying over the sands even during the heat of the hottest days. Often, in the evening, a coyote may be seen along the highway or near one of the campgrounds.

Some desert rodents, including the kangaroo rat, have adapted so well to life on the desert that they go through their entire lives without taking a drink; their bodies manufacture water from the food they eat. Kangaroo rats are often observed at night. Other animals one might see include the desert tortoise, several species of snakes, jackrabbits, kit fox or even a bobcat. Many kinds of birds, lizards, and insects make their homes in the desert.

Aquatic environments are limited in the desert, but several of these support one of the species of rare desert pupfish and are frequented by shorebirds and other wildlife.

VEGETATION

Adaptation is the key to survival on the desert. Plants must be able to live for long periods without water and to take advantage of brief but violent rain storms. Examples of this are the creosote bush which spreads its roots close to the surface to catch moisture before it evaporates, while mesquite roots often reach depths of 50 to 60 feet, enabling them to tap underground water supplies. Prevention of water loss is another important factor for survival. The creosote bush has developed leaves with a heavy waxy coating. Most cacti have no leaves; their green stems have taken over the function of food production.



Calico Ghost Town

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

The lands of the High Desert administered by the Bureau of Land Management offer excellent opportunities for the off-road vehicle (ORV) enthusiast. For those interested in ORV driving, there are several areas which provide a variety of terrain and are open for cross-country travel. Many miles of existing vehicle routes can be found on the high desert for long distance ORV travel. In some areas this travel is permitted only on designated roads and trails, posted by the Bureau of Land Management. In still other areas ORV travel is limited to existing vehicle routes and trails. For information on off-road vehicle use in the desert, see the California Desert Vehicle Program Map available at any California office of the Bureau of Land Management. Remember, desert driving can be hazardous; be aware of these hazards. BLM is developing a series of detailed maps covering the entire desert. These maps, which will show ORV use designations, will be available by 1977.

CALIFORNIA DESERT PROGRAM

The Bureau of Land Management's California Desert Program is designed to protect the myriad resources of the desert while providing for legitimate uses including recreation, mineral and energy development and grazing. It consists of concurrent elements of interim critical management to protect resources and desert users and long-range planning to develop a comprehensive plan for the management, protection and use of the desert.

National Resource Lands administered by BLM total more than 12 million acres or approximately half the desert area.

The most readily apparent pressure on the desert is mass recreation, most of it involving recreational vehicles. BLM's counts show recreation use of the desert grew from 5 million visitor use days in 1968 to more than 11½ million five years later, and the trend continues.

A key element of the interim management program is the desert ranger force. The first desert ranger was hired in 1972, and by 1975 the total had grown to 27 of the 90 that ultimately will be needed. The rangers do not have law enforcement authority, but rely on information, education and public cooperation to obtain compliance with regulations. Legislation pending in Congress would grant arrest and citation authority to BLM rangers.

The Barstow Way Station, first of 10 planned stations, was completed and opened to the public in 1974.

Reduction of hazards such as abandoned mine works and protection of cultural resources are being accomplished, frequently with the help of such user groups as off-road vehicle clubs. A desert tortoise preserve has been established and other areas identified for protection.

The California Desert Planning Staff finished the first of 27 individual management framework plans, a land and resource use plan, for the desert in 1975 and has begun resource inventories and analyses on additional segments.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Twenty points of special interest are numbered on the High Desert Recreation Resources Guide for the convenience of visitors. Descriptions of these features, with numbers keyed to those on the map and locations shown in terms of the map grid, follow:

(1) BARSTOW WAY STATION (4-D)

This Bureau of Land Management facility houses exhibits and displays about the natural history and environment of the high desert. Displays include desert ecology, wildflowers, wildlife and hazards. There is an opportunity to sample native desert plants once used by Indians for food and medicine and the visitor may test his "desert I.Q." Information on other subjects, such as desert safety, off-road vehicle activities and camping is also available, as well as free brochures and maps. As you near Barstow, tune to the AM radio frequency posted along the highway for additional information. The Way Station is open seven days a week, Monday through Thursday from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., and Friday from 7:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. and Saturday, Sunday and Holidays from 8:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Admission is free.



Petroglyphs

(2) CALICO MOUNTAINS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (5-D) 16 miles from Barstow Way Station.

The Calico early man site may be the oldest yet excavated in the Americas; minimum age is believed by some archaeologists to be 50,000 years. Early excavation was directed by noted palaeontologist Dr. Louis Leakey. The site is now maintained by the San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department and is open to the public. Tours of the dig are conducted as scheduled by the Parks Department. Check with the County Parks Department or Barstow Way Station for current schedules.

(3) CALICO GHOST TOWN (5-D) 12 miles from Barstow Way Station.

Calico was founded in 1881 when prospectors, camped in the Calico Mountains, made a rich silver strike. During the next 15 years more than \$86 million in high grade silver was mined. The population grew to 4,000 but in 1896 the price of silver dropped and by 1905 the town was deserted. In 1960 Walter Knott (of Knott's Berry Farm) began restoring the town to its former appearance. Calico is now owned by San Bernardino County and open to the public. There is a campground adjacent to the town with 45 spaces, water, sanitary dumping station and flush toilets. A fee is charged.

(4) AFTON CANYON (7-D, 7-E) 35 miles from Barstow Way Station.

The Mojave River rises in the San Bernardino Mountains near Lake Arrowhead and flows north through Victorville and Barstow, where it turns northeastward and eventually disappears in the Devil's Playground near Soda Dry Lake. Over the thousands of years it has followed this path the river slowly carved away the multi-colored rock layers in the gorge at Afton. Here the water flows on the surface most of the year, attracting wildlife and birds. Situated in the canyon is a BLM campground with 22 camping units consisting of table, stove and parking pad. Water is available. Overnight use is \$1.00; 14-day limit.



The Trona Pinnacles

(5) RODMAN MOUNTAIN PETROGLYPH SITE (6-C) 36 miles from Barstow Way Station.

Two fine examples of petroglyphs are found at Surprise Tank in the Rodman Mountains and at Inscription Canyon north of Opal Mountain. Vandalism at both sites has been heavy in recent years. The excellent petroglyphs at Surprise Tank are now protected by a barricade that admits foot traffic only. The roads to both sites are difficult to follow; stop at the Barstow Way Station for help with directions.

(6) INSCRIPTION CANYON PETROGLYPH SITE (3-E) 32 miles from Barstow Way Station.

This is a small arroyo about 200 yards long and 10 to 50 yards wide. Along the walls of the canyon there are more than 200 petroglyphs. Many have been destroyed by vandals, but enough remains of the site to make it worth a visit.

(7) GOLDSTONE TRACKING STATION (5-F) 33 miles from Barstow Way Station.

Goldstone is an old gold mining settlement dating from 1881. It is dotted with mining claims from that and subsequent gold strikes. Near the old settlement today is NASA's Goldstone Deep Space Tracking Station operated by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology. The Tracking Station is open to the public on a group tour basis only. Check with the Station before planning a trip.

(8) RAINBOW BASIN/OWL CANYON (4-D, 4-E) 12 miles from Barstow Way Station.

Formed some 10 to 30 million years ago on lake beds now vanished, Rainbow Basin contains the fossilized remains of many insects and animals. Many outstanding fossils have been found in the area, including fossilized insects said to be among the best preserved specimens found anywhere. Animals of the larger Miocene mammal group, camel, elephant, horse-like creatures, a huge "dog-bear" and other now forgotten species roamed this land and excellent specimens of the remains of these inhabitants of long ago have also been found. Erosion of the richly colored sedimentary layers by wind and water over the years has literally turned the basin into a rainbow of scenic beauty. In recognition of the unique nature of Rainbow Basin, it has been designated as a natural landmark. Fossil collecting is prohibited. The 4-mile Rainbow Basin Loop Road is narrow and impassable for vehicles larger than campers.

The BLM's Owl Canyon Campground, located about 1 mile east of Rainbow Basin, consists of 31 units with picnic tables, parking for car, camper or trailer, grills for cooking, 5 vault toilets, and a water supply for drinking. Overnight use \$1.00; 14-day limit.

(9) TRONA PINNACLES (3-H) 94 miles from Barstow Way Station.

The Pinnacles are located ten miles southwest of Trona on the bed of Searles Lake. The Pinnacles are thought to have been formed by blue-green algae around the vents of hot springs issuing from the floor of a large fresh water lake that once covered the area. The pinnacles are the most spectacular tufa formations in North America. Hiking around them can be fun, but the tufa can cut like coral. The road may be impassable after rain.



Owl Canyon Campground

(10) KELSO SAND DUNES (9-D, 10-D) 100 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-15.

Although not the most extensive, the Kelso Dunes are among the most spectacular on the California desert. This dune system is closed to vehicle use. These dunes lie at the east end of Devil's Playground, a barren, sandy, windswept plain where westerly winds drive sand for 35 miles from the mouth of Afton Canyon. The sand accumulates at a site where strong storm winds from the north, south, and east counterbalance the westerlies. From great distances the white sands of the Kelso Dunes can be seen gleaming in the brilliant sunshine. Primrose, verbena and desert sunflowers carpet the area in spring. The area is accessible from the Kelbaker Road off I-15 to the north and I-40 to the south.

(11) PROVIDENCE MOUNTAINS STATE RECREATION AREA (MITCHELL CAVERNS) (11-D) 113 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-40.

The caverns for which the area was named are filled with intricate limestone formations and remain at a constant temperature of 65 degrees. Guided tours point out interesting features of the caverns such as stalactites, stalagmites, cave coral, flowstone and remains of Indian habitation. Check with State Park or Barstow Way Station personnel on times of tours. Overnight camping is available just below park headquarters. Along with the six campsites are water and restroom facilities.

(12) HOLE-IN-THE-WALL CAMPGROUND (11-E) 116 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-40

BLM campground on Black Canyon Road in eastern San Bernardino County. Located about midway between I-15 (via Cima Road) and I-40 (via Essex Road). Situated at 5,000 feet elevation in the desert and offering grotesque geologic formations of volcanic rock sculptured by wind and water. Facilities include 9 campsites, pit toilets and water. Overnight use \$1.00; 14-day limit.

(13) MID HILLS CAMPGROUND (11-E) 123 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-40.

Situated at 5,600 feet within a piñon pine and juniper woodland, this BLM campground offers excellent opportunities for hiking, horseback riding and sight-seeing. The attractive campground blends inconspicuously into the wooded setting. There are 30 campsites, pit toilets and water. Woodcutting is prohibited. Overnight use \$1.00; 14-day limit.

(14) CIMA DOME (10-F, 11-F) 104 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-15.

From I-15 between Halloran Springs and Valley Wells, about 25 miles east of Baker, one can look south and see the gently curving Cima Dome. The erosional forces of sun, wind, rain and chemical decomposition have worked away for ages at this solid, uniform-structured granite mountain reducing it to its present dome shape. Cima Dome and the surrounding area supports one of the best stands of Joshua trees found in the Mojave Desert. Cima Road leads southward through this magnificent Joshua tree forest and passes near Teutonia Peak, the only disruption of this otherwise perfectly smooth curved surface of the dome.

(15) PISGAH CRATER (7-C) 37 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-40.

The Pisgah Crater is in a cinder cone about 250 feet high surrounded by a succession of lava flows clearly visible from I-40. The visitor can see jagged edges, tunnels formed from hot lava, stalactites and huge bubbles formed in the cooling lava.

(16) AMBOY CRATER (9-B) 77 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-40.

The 200 foot cinder cone which contains Amboy Crater is situated near the northern extent of a five mile circular lava flow and is visible from old Route 66 west of the town of Amboy. The cone is situated in the center of a basin on an extensive sheet of black lava (basalt). The lava flow has a rough surface and blisters, most of them broken. Many caverns formed where the hot lava ran out at lower levels and cooled at the surface.

Amboy and Pisgah Craters are good examples of ancient volcanic activity on the desert, and are seen easily from the highway. Along the Kelbaker Road (9-F, 10-F), one may also see a volcanic field of twenty-six separate cones and several lava flows, grouped together.



Cinder cone

(17) DUMONT DUNES (8-H) 99 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-15.

The Dumont Dunes are used intensively by recreation vehicle enthusiasts from both California and Nevada. They offer a wide variety of challenges because every type of sand dune is represented. Most of the Dumont Dune system is open to off-road vehicles. The surrounding area is managed to protect its high scenic, wildlife, archaeological and historical values.

(18) EL MIRAGE DRY LAKE (1-B, 2-B) 46 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-15.

El Mirage Dry Lake is one of the most popular recreation areas in the high desert. The flat, hard lake bed is especially well suited for the variety of recreational activities for which it is used. On any weekend there are sand sailers, gyrocopters, gliders, motorcycles, dune buggies, model airplane and rocket enthusiasts, as well as automotive time trials. The dry lake bed is also used on weekdays by the motion picture industry to film movies and television commercials. These overlapping and conflicting uses create hazardous conditions during periods of heavy use.

(19) CLARK MOUNTAIN (10-G) 98 miles from Barstow Way Station via I-15.

Clark Mountain (elevation 7,929 feet) supports one of the two remnant white fir forests in the California Desert (the other is in the Kingston Range to the northwest). Animals and plants associated with white fir forests occur on and around this isolated limestone peak. Several rare plants and a rare land snail are found near the summit. Clark Mountain is closed to motorized vehicle travel. The mountain is popular for hiking and backpacking.

(20) HARVEY HOUSE (See Barstow inset map for location).

Harvey House played an important role in western history, providing railroad passengers with food and lodging along the Santa Fe Route. Harvey Houses, and the Ladies who served the hungry passengers, were made famous in a movie "Harvey Girls" which starred Judy Garland and featured Johnny Mercer's hit song, "On the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe."

ROCKHOUDING AREAS

Most of the rockhounding areas located on the map are already well-known and consequently have been heavily worked, but with a little perseverance good samples can still be found. Some of the area indicated on the map may be on private property; permission should be obtained from the owners. Those interested in becoming more acquainted with rockhounding or rockhounding areas are encouraged to contact local gem and mineral societies, rock shops, publications and maps, or to stop by the Barstow Way Station. A list of the most common minerals is shown below, along with their locations according to the map grid.

Clark Mountain



Minerals	Location
Agate	6D, 5E, 7C, 7E, 4D
Azurite	4B
Borax	4B
Calcite	6D, 5E, 7E
Carnelian	7C
Celestite	4D
Chalcedony	7E, 6D, 5E, 6C, 7C
Flourite	7E, 7C
Galena	3-4D
Geodes	7C, 6C
Halite	2H
Hanksite	2H
Hemimorphite	3-4D
Jasper	6D, 5E, 2E, 7C, 6C, 4D
Lava, Obsidian	6C, 8-9B
Moss Agate	7C
Nodules	6D, 2E, 7E
Onyx	7C
Opal	2E
Petrified Wood	4D
Pyrites	5E
Scheelite	1F
Silver	3A, 4D
Turquoise	4F
Travertine	4D

This land is **YOUR LAND**
KEEP IT CLEAN!



Dune buggies

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the multiple-use management of the 450 million acres of national resource lands, encompassing such renewable resources as timber, forage, and wildlife, and such non-renewable resources as minerals. BLM also administers the Outer Continental Shelf mineral leasing program. The Bureau surveys public lands and maintains the public land records of the United States. BLM administers some 16 million acres in California, of which about 12 million are in the California Desert.

For additional information contact:

State Director	District Manager
Bureau of Land Management	Bureau of Land Management
2800 Cottage Way, Rm E-2841	1695 Spruce Street
Sacramento, CA 95825	Riverside, CA 92507
(916) 484-4724	(714) 787-1462

Barstow Way Station
Bureau of Land Management
831 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
(714) 256-3591

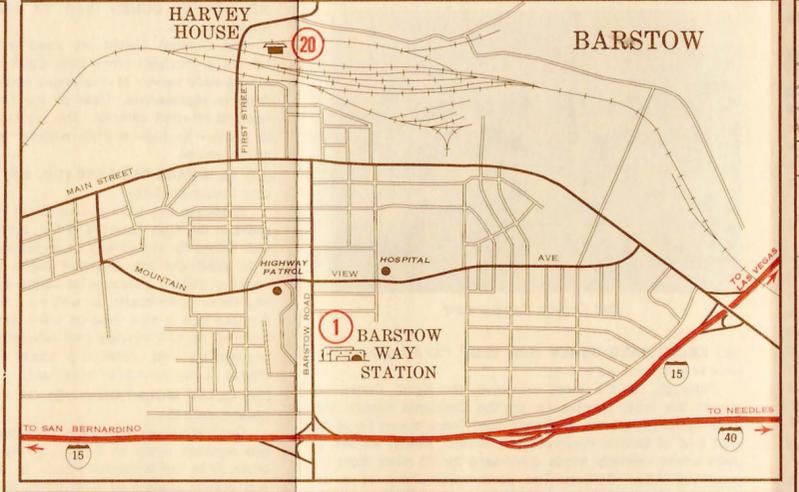
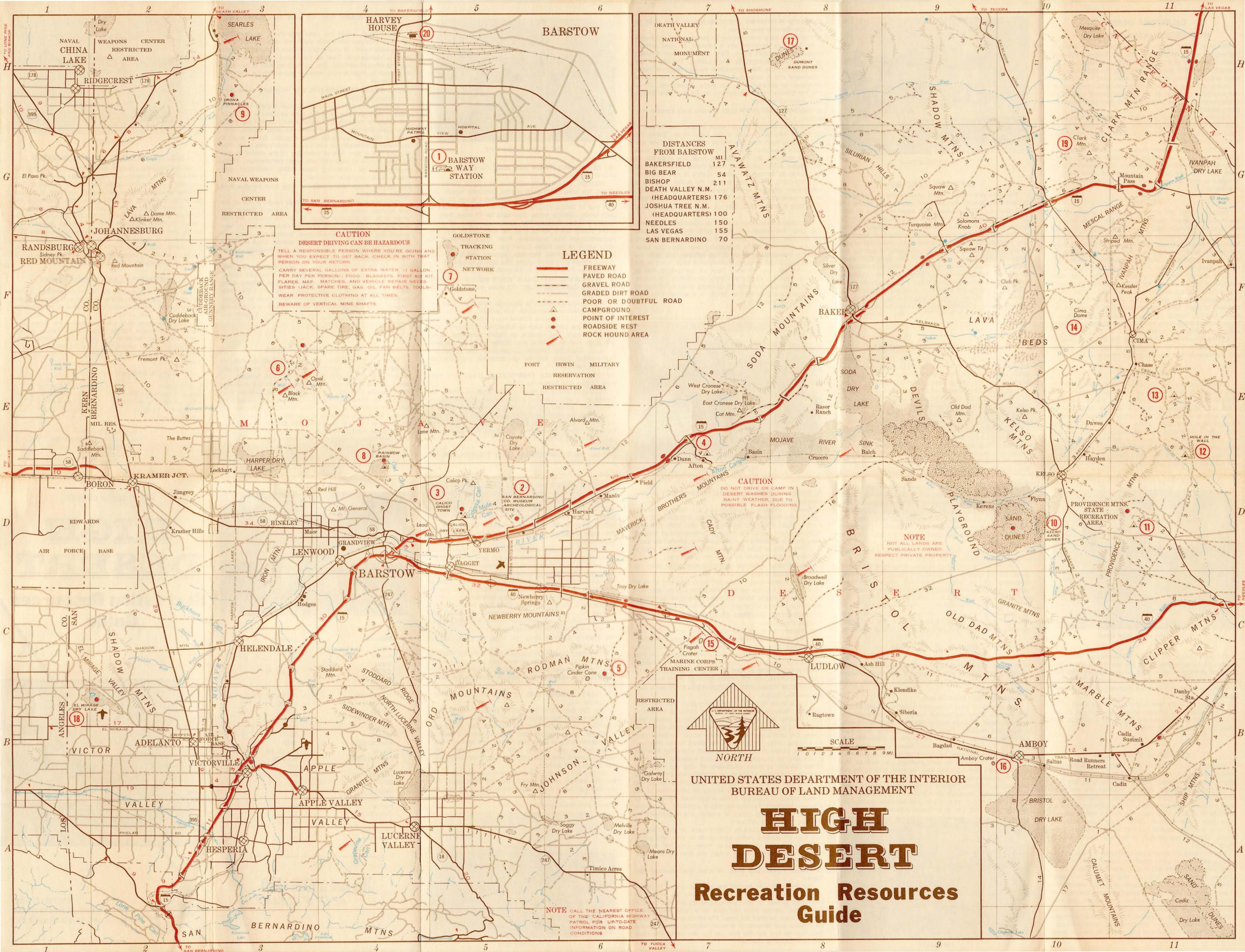
CALIFORNIA DESERT

HIGH DESERT

Recreation Resources Guide



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



DISTANCES FROM BARSTOW

BAKERSFIELD	127
BIG BEAR	54
BISHOP	211
DEATH VALLEY N.M. (HEADQUARTERS)	176
JOSHUA TREE N.M. (HEADQUARTERS)	100
NEEDLES	150
LAS VEGAS	155
SAN BERNARDINO	70

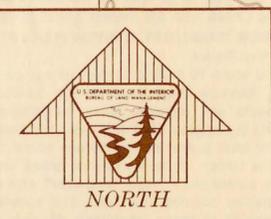
CAUTION
DESERT DRIVING CAN BE HAZARDOUS
TELL A RESPONSIBLE PERSON WHERE YOU'RE GOING AND WHEN YOU EXPECT TO GET BACK. CHECK IN WITH THAT PERSON ON YOUR RETURN.
CARRY SEVERAL GALLONS OF EXTRA WATER (1 GALLON PER DAY PER PERSON). FOOD, BLANKETS, FIRST AID KIT, FLARES, MAP, MATCHES, AND VEHICLE REPAIR NEEDS. SITES (JACK, SPARE TIRE, GAS, OIL, FAN BELTS, TOOLS). WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AT ALL TIMES. BEWARE OF VERTICAL MINE SHAFTS.

- LEGEND**
- FREEWAY
 - PAVED ROAD
 - GRAVEL ROAD
 - GRADED DIRT ROAD
 - POOR OR DOUBTFUL ROAD
 - CAMPGROUND
 - POINT OF INTEREST
 - ROADSIDE REST
 - ROCK HOUND AREA

CAUTION
DO NOT DRIVE OR CAMP IN DESERT WASHES DURING RAINY WEATHER DUE TO POSSIBLE FLASH FLOODING

NOTE
NOT ALL LANDS ARE PUBLICALLY OWNED. RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY.

NOTE CALL THE NEAREST OFFICE OF THE CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON ROAD CONDITIONS



SCALE
1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 MI.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

HIGH DESERT

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