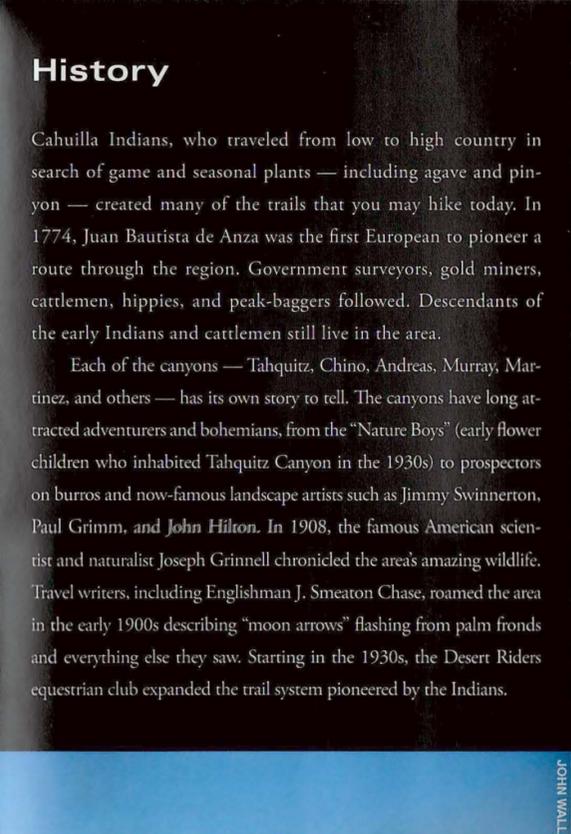




JANET CASS

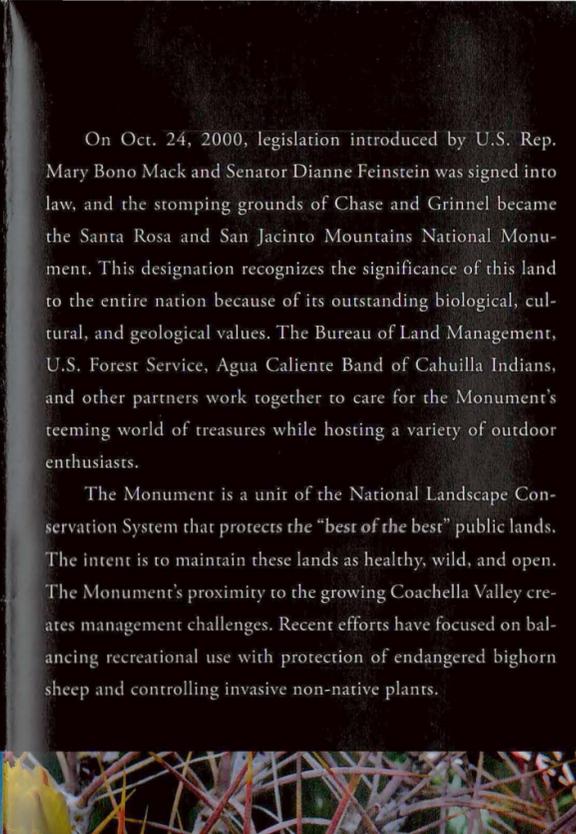


JANET CASS

History

Cahuilla Indians, who traveled from low to high country in search of game and seasonal plants — including agave and pinyon — created many of the trails that you may hike today. In 1774, Juan Bautista de Anza was the first European to pioneer a route through the region. Government surveyors, gold miners, cattlemen, hippies, and peak-baggers followed. Descendants of the early Indians and cattlemen still live in the area.

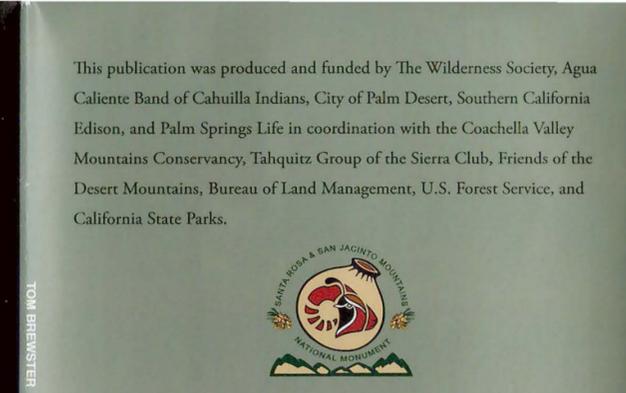
Each of the canyons — Tahquitz, Chino, Andreas, Murray, Martinez, and others — has its own story to tell. The canyons have long attracted adventurers and bohemians, from the “Nature Boys” (early flower children who inhabited Tahquitz Canyon in the 1930s) to prospectors on burros and now-famous landscape artists such as Jimmy Swinnerton, Paul Grimm, and John Hilton. In 1908, the famous American scientist and naturalist Joseph Grinnell chronicled the area’s amazing wildlife. Travel writers, including Englishman J. Smeaton Chase, roamed the area in the early 1900s describing “moon arrows” flashing from palm fronds and everything else they saw. Starting in the 1930s, the Desert Riders equestrian club expanded the trail system pioneered by the Indians.



TOM BREWSTER

On Oct. 24, 2000, legislation introduced by U.S. Rep. Mary Bono Mack and Senator Dianne Feinstein was signed into law, and the stomping grounds of Chase and Grinnel became the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. This designation recognizes the significance of this land to the entire nation because of its outstanding biological, cultural, and geological values. The Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and other partners work together to care for the Monument’s teeming world of treasures while hosting a variety of outdoor enthusiasts.

The Monument is a unit of the National Landscape Conservation System that protects the “best of the best” public lands. The intent is to maintain these lands as healthy, wild, and open. The Monument’s proximity to the growing Coachella Valley creates management challenges. Recent efforts have focused on balancing recreational use with protection of endangered bighorn sheep and controlling invasive non-native plants.



TOM BREWSTER

This publication was produced and funded by The Wilderness Society, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, City of Palm Desert, Southern California Edison, and Palm Springs Life in coordination with the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, Tahquitz Group of the Sierra Club, Friends of the Desert Mountains, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and California State Parks.



Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains

NATIONAL MONUMENT

Natural and Cultural Features

The most unmistakable natural feature of the Monument is its sheer verticality. The Mount San Jacinto escarpment greeting visitors at the western end of the Coachella Valley is one of the steepest in the United States, rising in a short distance from 1,200 feet above sea level to 10,834 feet. To get a close-up cutaway view of the dynamic uplift (it’s still rising), ride the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway.

The sudden rise from desert floor to high mountains creates a diverse range of life zones, or habitats, from the cactus and creosote bush below 3,000 feet in elevation to the pine and fir forests above 7,000 feet. You would have to drive from here to Canada to find the same variety of plants occupying this escarpment.

A celebrity species of the Monument is the Peninsular bighorn sheep. Don’t feel snubbed if you don’t make a sighting,

though. This endangered population of sheep is cautious of humans and has declined in numbers over the past decades. In response, a coalition of various agencies, organizations and individuals is working to increase the number of healthy bighorn sheep.

Scientists consider the Monument a hotspot of biodiversity; it’s hospitable to all sorts of life. There are plants found here that exist nowhere else in the world, as well as many rare and endangered species including the Southern yellow bat and a migrating songbird called the least Bell’s vireo. Hardy locals include creosote, desert agave, pinyon pine, kangaroo rat, rosy boa, Costa’s hummingbird, Gambel’s quail, and the roadrunner.

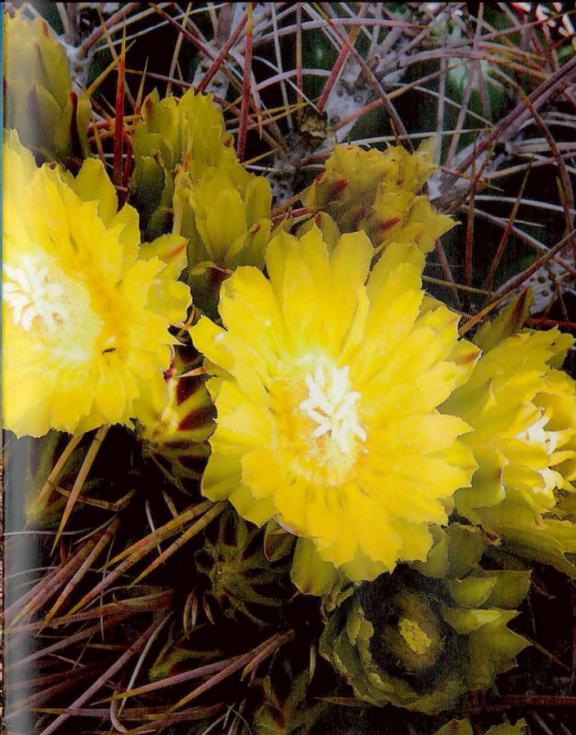
The native fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*) oases found here are havens of shade, water, and tranquility. The Indian Canyons claim the largest oasis of these stately trees in the world; it’s a true Shangri-la.

The Cahuilla Indians were frequent users of the palm oases. While their permanent villages were clustered near streams in the canyons, they visited traveling camps at higher elevations to gather food and hunt game, particularly during the hot summer months. The Pinyon Flat area, several miles up Highway 74, was a nexus of prehistoric trails and agave pits (hearths for roasting agave) frequented by the Cahuilla.

Throughout the Monument you might encounter artifacts of the early residents ranging from pottery sherds and arrowheads to bedrock mortars and grinding slicks. Please remember that disturbing or removing any artifact is against the law. It’s more satisfying to leave a piece of the past where it was found.



JOHN WALLACE



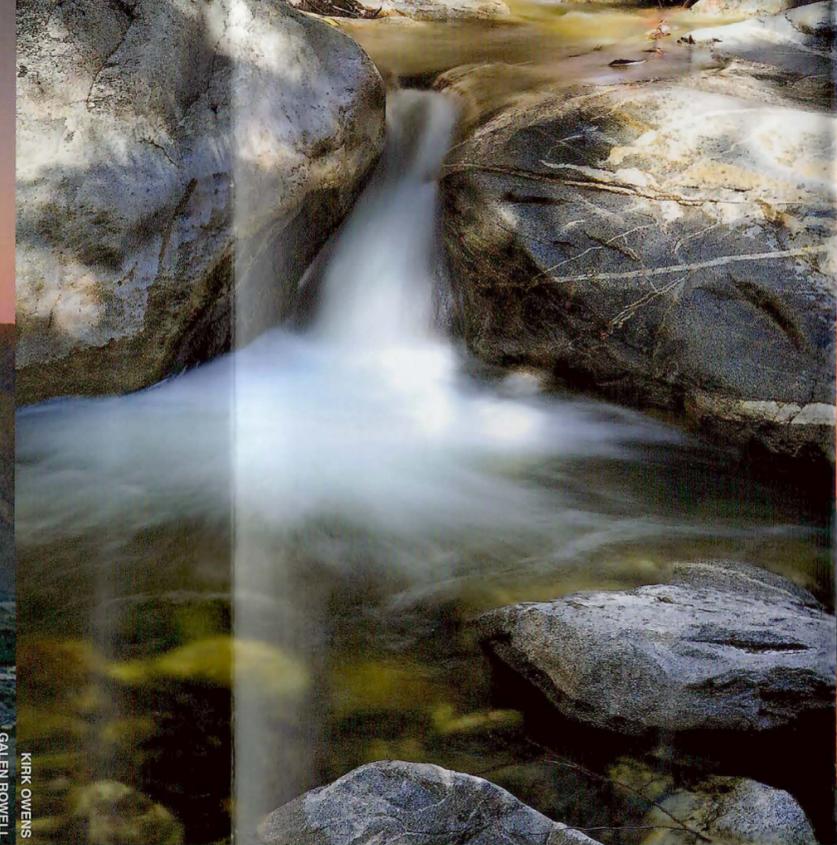
KIM OVERTON



TOM BREWSTER



KIRK OWENS
GALEN POWELL



TOM BREWSTER

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument

Some people look at these mountains and see only a two-dimensional backdrop to the resort towns of the Coachella Valley. J. Smeaton Chase, an early 20th century writer and explorer, thought Mount San Jacinto to appear “almost artificial” as it rears up from the surrounding desert. But don’t be fooled. It is very real indeed. You need only take a couple of twists and turns up a canyon trail or a ridgeline to leave the urban world of Southern California behind. The hidden palm oases and granite spires have inspired artists and writers from Ansel Adams to Maynard Dixon and John Muir. Generations of Cahuilla Indians still know the names of the powerful beings inhabiting nearly every peak and boulder you see today.

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument is a land of extremes. At lower elevations where the

Monument barely rises above sea level, the summers are hot and dry with occasional monsoonal rains. Sparsely-vegetated slopes here clearly expose a landscape that has yielded to powerful geologic forces. In counterpoint, at more than 10,000 feet above the desert floor, geometric chunks of granite tower above mature forests. Hikers can experience winter snows while inhaling the caramel scent of Jeffrey pine. An ever-changing light on these canyons and mountains makes for nonstop “topographical surprise” throughout the year.

This is not your typical park where most everything is mapped and signed for you. Instead, opportunities abound for anyone who seeks discovery and solitude. If you’re willing to be your own guide, the Monument offers experiences hard to find elsewhere in South-

ern California. Hint: Every canyon is a secret entrance. Find a canyon trail on your map and begin searching. You might encounter a plein-air artist at work, catch a glimpse of a bighorn sheep, discover an ancient grinding stone, or stumble upon a mystery only you can solve.

For those without the time or inclination for such adventures, the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway and the Indian Canyons Heritage Park offer easy access to some of the Monument’s spectacular natural wonders, landscapes, and cultural treasures. The single paved road that bisects the Monument (Highway 74, also known as the Palms to Pines Scenic Highway) is a serpentine mountain drive that has appeared in movies and automobile ads, including the madcap chase scenes in the 1963 film *It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.



“As we sat there in the shadow of the palms, knowing the great silent desert was just behind us, and the towering mountain peaks just ahead, we felt full of a strange, expectant awe as if some new, great, wonderful thing might happen at any moment.”

— George Wharton James



JANICE KLEINSCHMIDT

Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains

NATIONAL MONUMENT

Getting Oriented

The 272,000-acre Monument lies at the northern end of the Peninsular Ranges, a chain of mountains that extends 900 miles south from Palm Springs to the tip of Baja California, Mexico.

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains are about 100 miles east of downtown Los Angeles via Interstate 10. The Monument begins where Highway 111 breaks away from I-10. If you drive 111 through the Coachella Valley, you're roughly following the base of the Monument from Palm Springs to the northern reaches of the Salton Sea and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Access can also be gained from the "high side" of the Monument via Highway 74 or by hiking trails from Garner Valley and the mountain community of Idyllwild.

The first object likely to arrest your attention when approaching from the west is 10,834-foot Mount San Jacinto, one of the highest peaks in Southern California. The twin horns of Toro Peak (8,716 feet) and Santa Rosa Mountain (8,670 feet) to the southeast dominate this less-explored and less-visited portion of the Monument.

Exploring the Monument

A good first stop is the National Monument Visitor Center in Palm Desert, located four miles up Highway 74 from Highway 111. Here you'll find native plant gardens, trails, and interpretive exhibits, as well as information about recreation opportunities, road conditions, and regulations. The gift shop sells books, guides, and maps that will help you explore the area.

Now that you have your bearings, you can get out there and explore. Be your own naturalist. Be your own botanist. Be your own explorer.

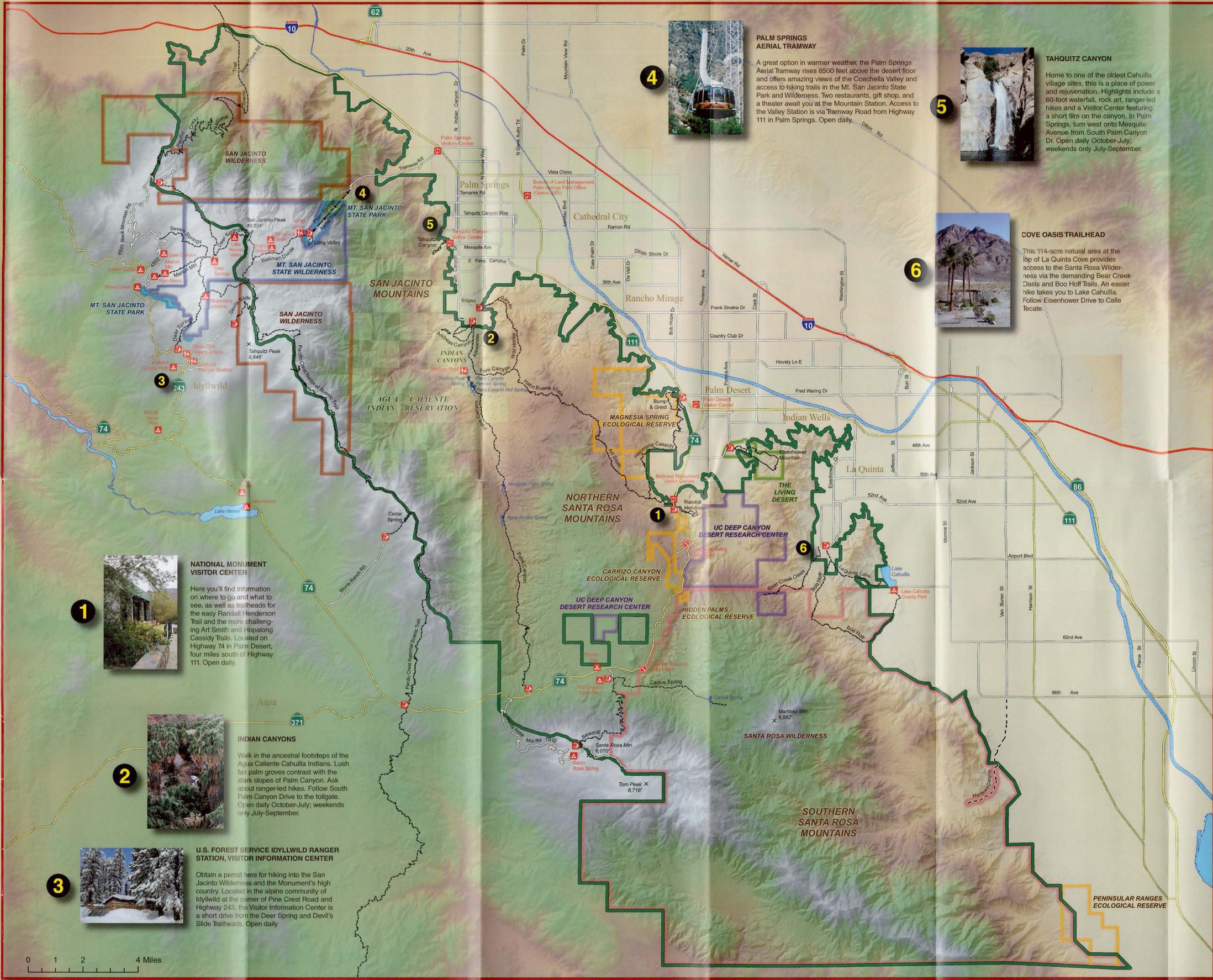
The Monument includes many miles of trails for hikers, bikers, and equestrians — including a segment of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (use of the PCT is limited to hikers and horses). Popular portals for accessing trails are the National Monument Visitor Center, Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, Indian Canyons, Tahquitz Canyon Visitor Center, La Quinta Cove Oasis, and the community of Idyllwild.

If you have limited time and desire an easy walk, consider these three options: explore the Randall Henderson Trail which starts at the National Monument Visitor Center; follow meandering trails through a palm oasis at the Indian Canyons (fee required); or wander through Long Valley at the top of the Tramway (fee required for tram ride). If you would rather not go it alone, a guided hike to a perennial waterfall is offered at the Tahquitz Canyon Visitor Center (fee required).

Visitors with more time and an appetite for challenge might take on one of the more difficult trails in the Monument, such as an ascent to the top of Mount San Jacinto starting from the Tramway's Mountain Station, the Bear Creek Oasis Trail or Boo Hoff Trail starting at La Quinta Cove Oasis, or one of several trails leading into the Monument from Idyllwild.

For a motorized overview of the Monument, take a drive on Highway 74, also known as the Palms to Pines Scenic Highway. The road passes through a range of habitats, or life zones, and introduces the visitor to a variety of terrain from rolling plateaus to coniferous forests. The drive is well worth it, but please be careful. This is a narrow, winding mountain road with few pullouts.

You might also enjoy visiting Martinez Mountain Rockslide, the second largest slide of its kind in the United States; Ancient Lake Cahulla shoreline, site of Indian habitation for thousands of years; and Cahulla Tewaner Vista Point, where you can learn about native plants used by the local Indians and enjoy a dramatic view into Deep Canyon, "The Yosemite of the Desert."



1



NATIONAL MONUMENT VISITOR CENTER
Here you'll find information on where to go and what to see, as well as trailheads for the easy Randall Henderson Trail and the more challenging Art Smith and Hopalong Cassidy Trails. Located on Highway 74 in Palm Desert, four miles south of Highway 111. Open daily.

2



INDIAN CANYONS
Walk in the ancestral footsteps of the Agua Caliente Cahulla Indians. Lush fan palm groves contrast with the stark slopes of Palm Canyon. Ask about ranger-led hikes. Follow South Palm Canyon Drive to the tollgate. Open daily October-July; weekends only July-September.

3



U.S. FOREST SERVICE IDYLLWILD RANGER STATION, VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER
Obtain a permit here for hiking into the San Jacinto Wilderness and the Monument's high country. Located in the alpine community of Idyllwild at the corner of Pine Crest Road and Highway 243, the Visitor Information Center is a short drive from the Deer Spring and Devil's Slide Trailheads. Open daily.

4



PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAMWAY
A great option in warmer weather, the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway rises 8500 feet above the desert floor and offers amazing views of the Coachella Valley and access to hiking trails in the Mt. San Jacinto State Park and Wilderness. Two restaurants, gift shop, and a theater await you at the Mountain Station. Access to the Valley Station is via Tramway Road from Highway 111 in Palm Springs. Open daily.

5

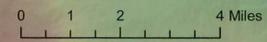


TAHQUITZ CANYON
Home to one of the oldest Cahulla village sites, this is a place of power and rejuvenation. Highlights include a 60-foot waterfall, rock art, ranger-led hikes and a Visitor Center featuring a short film on the canyon. In Palm Springs, turn west onto Mesquite Avenue from South Palm Canyon Dr. Open daily October-July; weekends only July-September.

6



COVE OASIS TRAILHEAD
This 114-acre natural area at the top of La Quinta Cove provides access to the Santa Rosa Wilderness via the demanding Bear Creek Oasis and Boo Hoff Trails. An easier hike takes you to Lake Cahulla. Follow Eisenhower Drive to Calle Tecate.



Advice and Reminders

Much of this landscape is remote and challenging. You can't always depend on a signpost or a ranger to get you out of a fix. Pack so that you could take care of yourself — if necessary — overnight.

- **Hike with a friend.** Or tell a friend where you will be hiking and when you expect to return.
- **Carry as much water as you can.** As a rule of thumb, you need at least one liter of water per hour of hiking. When half of your water is gone, turn around and head back.
- **Protect yourself from the sun.** Dress in layers. Wear a hat, sunglasses, protective clothing, and sturdy footwear. Use sun screen. Bring warm layers and a water proof shell on longer hikes — the weather can change quickly.
- **Know your trail.** Carry a map and pay attention to the terrain so you can find your way back.
- **Beware of rattlesnakes.** Watch where you put your hands and feet, especially in warm weather when snakes are active.
- **Keep children near you and stay on the trail.**

Contacts

Whatever your fancy may be, you can learn more about opportunities for exploration and adventure in the Monument by calling or stopping by the National Monument Visitor Center. Additional information about attractions in the Monument can be obtained from the following:

National Monument Visitor Center:
call (760) 862-9984.

Palm Springs Aerial Tramway:
call (760) 325-1391 or visit www.pstramway.com.

Mount San Jacinto State Park and Wilderness: call (951) 659-2607.

U.S. Forest Service Idyllwild Ranger Station, Visitor Information Center:
call (909) 382-2921.

Indian Canyons: call (760) 323-6018 or visit www.indian-canyons.com.

Tahquitz Canyon Visitor Center:
call (760) 416-7044 or visit www.TahquitzCanyon.com.

Palm Springs Visitors Center:
call (760) 778-8418 or visit www.palm-springs.org.

Palm Desert Visitor Center:
call (760) 568-1441 or visit www.palm-desert.org.

The Living Desert: call (760) 346-5694 or visit www.livingdesert.org.

Lake Cahulla County Park:
call (760) 564-4712 or visit www.riversidecountyparks.org.

Information about Peninsular Bighorn Sheep is available from:

Bighorn Institute: call (760) 346-7334 or visit www.bighorninstitute.org.

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHY: BONNIE ADKINS, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, DAINE MURPHY, PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAMWAY, AND UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE.