

Crescent Peak Scenic Drive

The Crescent Peak Scenic Drive is on the east side of the proposed Avi Kwa Ame National Monument near the Nevada/California boundary. Crescent Peak, at 5,997 is the dominant peak in the area. Access to this area is off Nevada Highway #164, the Joshua Tree Highway about 12 miles west of Searchlight. Turn (left) south on the Crescent Peak Road which is 2 miles before you get to the California State line. You go 3 miles on the Crescent Peak Road to the end where there is a sign restricting travel past that point as it is private land. There is a backcountry road that takes off to the right at that location that goes 2 miles through a beautiful Joshua Tree Forest with views of the backside of the Castle Peaks and the New York Mountains and Clark Mountain in the Mojave National Preserve. That road is in good shape but you should have a high clearance vehicle but do not need 4-wheel drive.



The area has a rich mining history, particularly turquoise mining. There is a history of turquoise mining in the Crescent Peak area by Frank R. Morrissey inside a report titled, “Nevada Bureau of Mines – Report 17 by Vernon E. Scheid.” According to the report, the turquoise mine at Crescent Peak was “re-discovered” in 1889 or 1890 by a George Simmons. Following a trail up the side of Crescent Peak, he came to the source which proved to be the abandoned remains of a mine worked by the aborigines. Larger fragments of turquoise lay scattered about, together with abandoned stone chisels, wedges, and hammers. According to the report, archaeologists estimate the mine must have been worked and abandoned 200 years before Columbus reached America.



a fire against the face of the rock, then throw water on the hot stone, causing it to crack. Wedges were then driven into the cracks until the mass broke away. Simmons dug a quantity of turquoise from the mine and took it to London for appraisal. Assured of the quality and the probable price he could expect, he returned and expanded operations.

Around 1894 an area centered around Crescent Peak, became known as the Crescent Peak Mining District. In 1896 Simmons sold the mine to his partner, J.R. Woods who renamed it The Turquoise Mine. He abandoned it when the ore dwindled to a point where it could no longer be mined profitably at decreased prices. Over the years, a number of miners worked the veins and abandoned them. The mines at Crescent Peak have been known by a variety of names, including the Simmons Mine, the Turquoise Mine, the Aztec Mine, Right Blue Mine and the Crescent Peak Mine.



Crescent Peak –West Side



New York Mountains



Castle Peaks



Castle Peaks



New York Mountains

During early operation of the Simmons mine, numerous occurrences of turquoise were prospected for a radius of about a mile from the main mine area. The next registered owner and operator was O. R. Spear who bought the original claims at a tax sale. Spear died in 1965. After that it was worked by various people who purchased leases on he claims. It is not known whether the current owners are actively mining.



Crescent Peak — West Side



Crescent Peak — West Side



Clark Mountain