



Carrizo Plain Natural Area

Welcome to the Carrizo Plain Natural Area, the largest remaining example of the San Joaquin Valley grasslands as they existed in California 300 years ago. It is a powerful yet peaceful landscape of sky and earth in a pattern seen nowhere else. As you explore this living museum, remember the *closer you look, the more you see*.

Geography and Climate: The Carrizo Plain is an internal drainage basin with all surface water draining to Soda Lake. The lake evaporates and becomes a white, salt-encrusted basin during the dry season. The plain stretches for about 50 miles north to south; it is bordered on the northeast by the Temblor Mountains and on the southwest by the Caliente Mountains. Caliente Mountain, the highest peak in San Luis Obispo County, stands 5,106 feet high while the Temblors reach up to 4,332 feet high at McKittrick Summit. The San Andreas Fault makes its seemingly quiet path through the area and is clearly visible near Wallace Creek. The plain is one of the sunniest places in California and summer temperatures often exceed 100 degrees F. On winter nights, however, temperatures often dip below freezing.

Plants and Animals: Plant communities range from iodine bush scrub and saltbush scrub to valley grasslands and California juniper woodland. Endangered animals living on the plain include the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, the San Joaquin kit fox, the giant kangaroo rat, and the San Joaquin antelope ground squirrel. Tule elk and pronghorn antelope have been reintroduced into the area and can be seen at various locations on the plain. Winter brings thousands of sandhill cranes to Soda Lake. Many raptors, including redtail hawks, golden eagles, kites, harriers, owls, and others, can be found all year throughout the area. The California condor has been reintroduced nearby and may someday return to the Carrizo Plain.

Human History: Chumash, Yokut, and other Native Americans hunted and traded in the area. Painted Rock, probably used for religious ceremonies, is one of the more significant examples of Native American rock art in California. Dryland grain farming and ranching developed in the late 1800s; in 1912 mechanized agriculture brought large-scale farming to the plain. Today, most people come to Carrizo for recreation -- birding, hiking, photography, camping, hunting, and just plain relaxing.

Management: The Carrizo Plain Natural Area, covering almost 250,000 acres, is managed jointly by the Bureau of Land Management, the California Department of Fish and Game, and The Nature Conservancy. A primary management focus is rare and endangered plants and animals and restoration of native ecosystems. Research is an

active and important part of management, and many research projects are underway at this time, including population studies of giant kangaroo rats and the California Jewelflower and ecological studies of native shrub and grassland restoration. Merging human use and natural area protection, prescribed fire and cattle are used as management tools to reduce competition between the alien annual grasses and the native annual and perennial grasses, giving a competitive advantage to the natives.

Some Helpful Hints

- Services (gasoline, food, water) are not available.
- Stay on designated roads. No off-road use. Dirt roads are impassable or closed when wet and have a potential for fire danger in summer.
- Permits are required for campfires during fire season and are available at the Bakersfield BLM office.
- Plants, artifacts, and rock art are protected ; so please don't remove or touch them.
- Do not harass wildlife or livestock.
- Leave No Trace when hiking and camping. Pack out what you pack in. Remember to bring what you need (gasoline, water, etc.) because this is a remote area.
- Follow hunting regulations.
- Painted Rock may be closed due to rain or muddy road conditions and is closed to public access March 1 through July 15 to protect biological and cultural resources. Guided tours are offered in April and May by reservation only. Please call the Education Center for tour reservations or further information.

Facilities

- KCL and Selby Camp - primitive camping, portable toilets, no drinking water. Non-potable water is available at Selby Camp.
- Goodwin Education Center (Visitor Center) - information, brochures, campfire permits, restrooms, no water. Open December through May, Thursday through Sunday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Closed holidays.
- Painted Rock - toilet, picnic tables, no water, ½ hour trail from parking lot to Native American pictograph site.
- Soda Lake Overlook - vista, portable toilet, no water.

Services

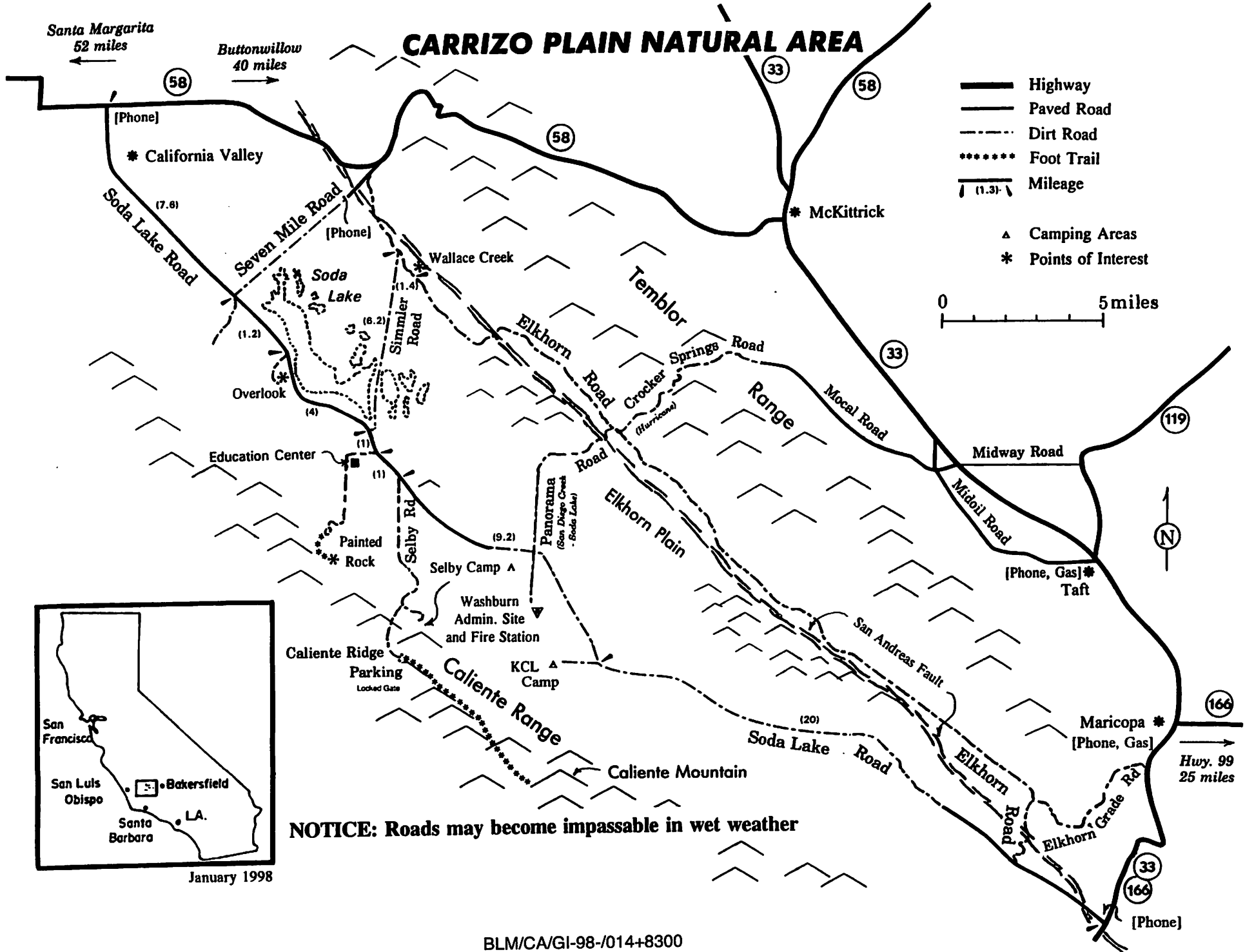
- Pay telephones are located at the intersections of Highways 58 and 166 with Soda Lake Road.
- Gasoline is available in Taft and Maricopa.

For More Information

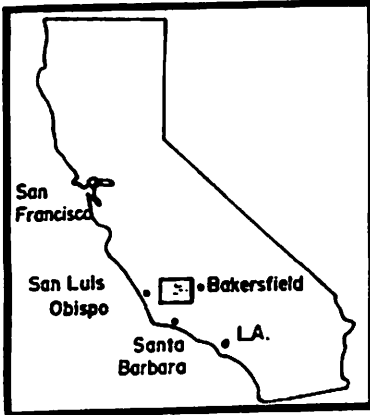
- Goodwin Education Center - (805) 475-2131 or write: P. O. Box 3087
California Valley, California 93453



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NOTICE: Roads may become impassable in wet weather



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