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# arrizo Plain National Monument

# 2015

*Visitors' Guide*



# Your Guide to the Carrizo Plain National Monument

California's Beautiful Carrizo Plain • Where to Visit and What to See • Painted Rock • The California Wildflowers



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# Carrizo Plain National Monument

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Welcome.....4  
 What is the Carrizo Plain? A description .....5  
 A View From the Top.....6  
 Visiting the Plain A first-person point of view.....8  
 A New Land Trust.....10  
 Carrizo Plain is a Natural Laboratory for Studying the Geology of Earthquakes.....11  
 Fact Sheet..... 11  
 Painted Rock .....12  
 A History of a Special Place.....13  
 Vernal Pools of the Carrizo Plain.....14  
 The Big Check.....14  
 Carrizo Plain Native Baskets.....15  
 Map of Carrizo Plains.....16 & 17  
 The Composition of Caliente Mountain.....18  
 A Return to Early California.....19  
 Backroads and Byways of Carrizo Plain.....20  
 Other Area Attractions.....21  
 Wildlife of the Carrizo Plain.....22  
 The People Who Once Lived on the Carrizo Plain...24  
 Visitor Services  
   In Cuyama Valley .....27  
   In McKittrick, Maricopa, & Derby Acres .....27  
   In Taft.....28  
   In the Santa Margarita Valley.....29  
 Fabulous Back Roads of California.....30  
 Letter From President Ray Hatch.....31  
 Join the Friends of the Carrizo Plain.....31

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Publisher and Editor  
 Michael J. Long  
[taftindypublisher@bak.rr.com](mailto:taftindypublisher@bak.rr.com)

Contributing Writers  
 Jane McCabe Janelle Eastridge David Chipping  
 Alan Schmierer Kathy Sharum Sinan O. Akciz, Ph.D  
 Dirk Walters Neil Havlik Craig Deutsche Earl Bates

Printing  
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**Where is the Carrizo Plain National Monument?**  
 The Carrizo Plain National Monument, the largest remaining tract of the San Joaquin Valley biogeographic province with limited evidence of human alteration, is bordered by the Temblor Range to the northeast and the Caliente Range to the southwest. It is easily accessible by state Highways 33, 166, and 58.

**Getting There**  
**From Bakersfield:** Take state Highway 58 west past McKittrick, Turn left on 7 miles Road at the bottom of the Temblor Range. Turn left on Soda Lake Road.  
**From Taft and Maricopa:** Take state Highway 166 west. Turn right on Soda Lake Road.  
**From North San Luis Obispo County:** Take state Highway 58 east. Turn right on Soda Lake Road.  
**From Ojai:** Take state Highway 33 north. Turn right onto state Highway 166 in Cuyama. Turn left on Soda Lake Road.  
**From Santa Maria:** Take state Highway 166 east. Turn left on Soda Lake Road.

The Bureau of Land Management  
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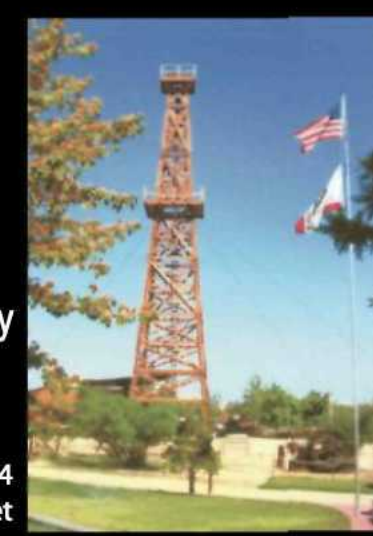
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# Welcome to the Carrizo Plain



Dear Readers,

On behalf of the Bureau of Land Management, I want to thank the Taft Independent for the opportunity, as the manager of the Carrizo Plain National Monument, to provide a “Welcome” for this visitors guide. The Carrizo Plain was designated a National Monument on Jan. 17th 2001, when President Clinton signed a proclamation designating it as a National Monument. Today it is cooperatively managed by the Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and The Nature Conservancy.

The Carrizo Plain is one of those areas when people mention its name the response is often, “where or what did you say”. It is one of those hidden treasures of California and for a lot of you reading this visitor guide you will find out it is right in your backyard and you didn’t even know it.

The Carrizo is recognized for its significant geologic, biological, historical and cultural resources. There are many things to see and do when you are out on the monument depending on your interest. In the spring, sometimes the monument is teaming with wildflowers. Generally the beginning of the wildflower season begins in late March and ends in mid-May, with the peak usually being the beginning of April.

For those interested in viewing wildlife, the Carrizo hosts many migratory birds during the winter months, which include mountain blue birds, many raptors and mountain plovers. Other

species that you may see are San Joaquin kit fox, a variety of snakes, lizards, Tule elk and occasionally a pronghorn antelope.

Guided and self-guided tours are offered seasonally to some sites on the monument such as the Soda Lake area and Painted Rock. If you are interested in a tour to Painted Rock you will need to go online to [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) to secure a permit. A permit is needed to access Painted Rock so be sure to get it prior to coming. You can also phone [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov) toll free at 1-877-444-6777. Please follow established rules when visiting Painted Rock; they are located on your permit.

Our visitor center is open seasonally December thru May, Thursday through Sunday 9:00 am to 4:00pm. Stop in to get brochures and other information while out on the monument. The phone number for the visitor center is (805) 475-2131.

If your interest lie in hiking, camping or hunting there are a few established hiking trails or you can just set off and take your own hike. There are two campgrounds located on the monument on a first come first serve basis and there is dispersed car camping (leave no trace), in the foothills of the monument. While hunting on the monument all California Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations are in effect. You may want to check the BLM Carrizo website prior to coming to see special rules that may be in effect, a map outlining the dispersed car camping areas and general information. While exploring the monument remember all vehicles must stay on established routes of travel.

It has been said that during certain times of the year you can “hear the quite”. This is one area that you can go all day without seeing another person. So please be prepared with food, gas, water and protective clothing before entering the monument. During the winter many roads become impassible due to wet conditions and temperatures often fall below freezing, while in the summer temperatures often exceed 100 degrees. So please be prepared!

In closing, whatever your interest may be that brought you to the monument you may be quietly surprised if you remember “The closer you look, the more you see”.

Enjoy your visit!  
Johna Hurl

*Carrizo Plain Visitors' Guide*



## What is the Carrizo Plain National Monument?

Full of natural splendor and rich in human history, the majestic grasslands and stark ridges in the Carrizo Plain National Monument contain exceptional objects of scientific and historic interest. Since the mid-1800s, large portions of the grasslands that once spanned the entire 400-mile expanse of California’s nearby San Joaquin Valley and other valleys in the vicinity have been eliminated by extensive land conversion to agricultural, industrial, and urban land uses. The Carrizo Plain National Monument, which is dramatically bisected by the San Andreas Fault zone, is the largest undeveloped remnant of this ecosystem, providing crucial habitat for the long-term conservation of the many endemic plant and animal species that still inhabit the area.

The monument offers a refuge for endangered, threatened, and rare animal species such as the San Joaquin kit fox, the California condor, the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, the giant kangaroo rat, the San Joaquin antelope squirrel, the longhorn fairy shrimp, and the vernal pool fairy shrimp. It supports important populations of pronghorn antelope and tule elk. The area is also home to many rare and sensitive plant species, including the California jewelflower, the Hoover’s woolly-star, the San-Joaquin woolly-threads, the pale-yellow layia, the forked fiddleneck, the Carrizo peppergrass, the Lost Hills saltbush, the Temblor buckwheat, the recurved larkspur, and the Munz’s tidytips. Despite past human use, the size, isolation, and relatively undeveloped nature of the area make it ideal for long-term

conservation of the dwindling flora and fauna characteristic of the San Joaquin Valley region.

The Carrizo Plain National Monument also encompasses Soda Lake, the largest remaining natural alkali wetland in southern California and the only closed basin within the coastal mountains. As its name suggests, Soda Lake concentrates salts as water is evaporated away, leaving white deposits of sulfates and carbonates. Despite this harsh environment, small plant and animal species are well adapted to the setting, which is also important to migratory birds. During the winter months, the lake fills with water and teems with thousands of beautiful sandhill cranes, long-billed curlews, and mountain plovers.

The Carrizo Plain National Monument owes its existence to the geologic processes that occur along the San Andreas Fault, where two of the Earth’s five great tectonic plates slide past one another, parallel to the axis of the Plain. Shifting along the fault created the Plain by rumpling the rocks to the northeast into the Temblor Range and isolating the Plain from the rest of the San Joaquin Valley. The area is world-famous for its spectacular exposures of fault-generated landforms. Stream valleys emerge from the adjacent mountains, only to take dramatic right-angle turns where they intersect the fault. Ponds and sags form where the ground is extended and subsides between branches of the fault. Benches form where the fault offsets valley walls. Many dramatic landscape features are products of the interplay between very rapid fault movement and slower erosion.

*Carrizo Plain Visitors' Guide*

5

# A view from the top



The dry climate of the area produces low erosion rates, thereby preserving the spectacular effects of fault slip, folding, and warping. On the Plain, these fault-related events happen intermittently, but with great force. In 1857, the strongest earthquake in California's recorded history ripped through the San Andreas Fault, wrenching the western side of the Carrizo Plain National Monument 31 feet northward.

The area is also distinguished for its significant fossil assemblages. The Caliente Formation, exposed on the southeast side of the Caliente Range, is host to abundant and diverse terrestrial fossil mammal remains of the Miocene Epoch (from 13 million to 25 million years ago). Fossils of five North American provincial mammalian ages (Arikareean, Hemingfordian, Barstovian, Clarendonian, and Hemphillian) are represented in sedimentary rocks in that formation. These terrestrial fossil remains are interlaced with marine sedimentary rocks bearing fossils of mollusks, pectens, turitellas, and oysters.

In addition to its geologic and biological wealth, the area is rich in human history. Archaeologists theorize that humans have occupied the Carrizo Plain National Monument area since the Paleo-Indian Period (circa 11,000 to 9,000 B.C.).

Bedrock mortar milling features, village middens, and elaborate pictographs are the primary manifestations of prehistoric occupation. The Painted Rock art site is recognized as world class. European expeditions through the area date back to the late 1700s, with settlement beginning in the 1850s. Livestock ranching, farming, and mining activities in the last century and a half are evidenced by numerous artifacts and historic ranch properties within the area.

*Information gathered from The White House's Office of the Press Secretary, written Jan. 17, 2001.*



Wernher Krutein/Photovault.com

*The Carrizo Plain National Monument offers visitors a glimpse into the San Joaquin Valley's natural habitat.*



**Carrizo Plain Visitors' Guide**

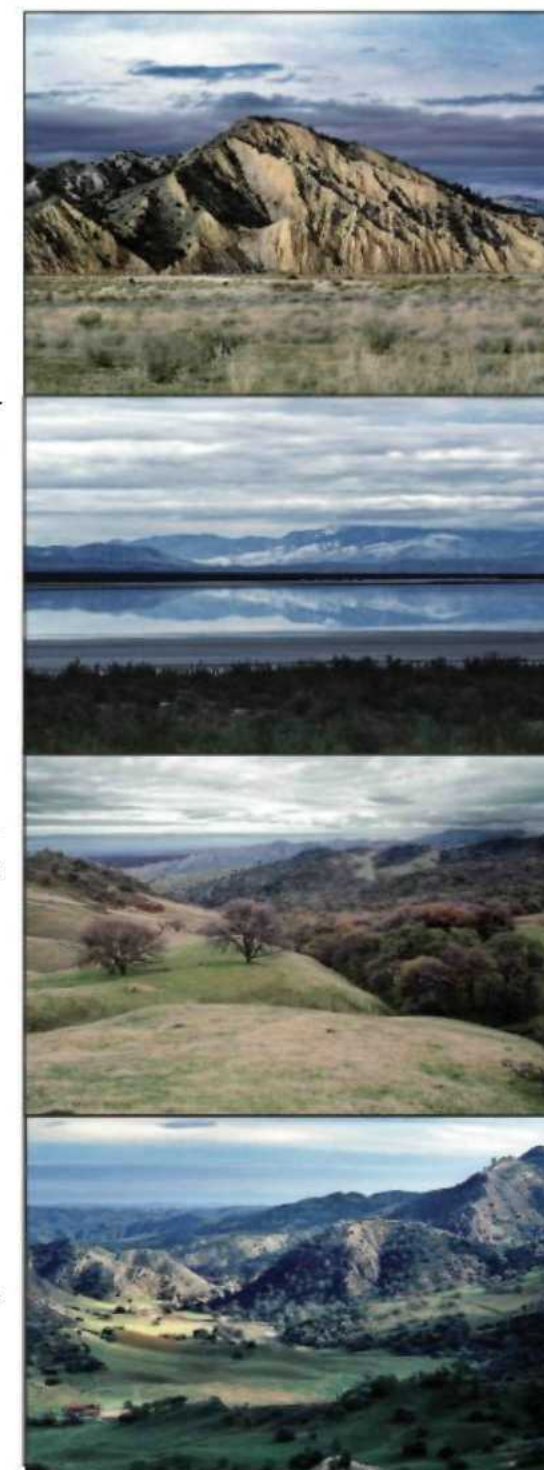
*The above photo was taken atop the Temblor Mountain Range behind Crocker Springs over looking the Carrizo Plain with Soda Lake in the distant right. By Jessica Skidgel*

The Carrizo Plain is located between the coastal ranges of California's eastern San Luis Obispo County lies an immaculate landscape comprised of blossoming flowers and awe-inspiring views. Hundreds of miles of open space characterize this rolling plain, providing RV rental travelers with a place to relax and rejuvenate before heading off on another west coast adventure. So what is this place, you ask? The Carrizo Plain National Monument of course! Located in California's most secluded region, the Carrizo Plain National Monument has remained relatively untouched by human development for well over three centuries. Known as "Llano Estero" or the "Salt Marsh Plain", the Carrizo Plain National Monument features 250,000 acres of protected terrain, providing an array of rare plants and animals with miles of natural habitat and unspoiled environmental splendor. Owned and cooperatively managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the Nature Conservancy and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Carrizo Plain is a definite must-visit for RV rental nature lovers – so what are you waiting for! The Carrizo Plain National Monument is ready and waiting to dazzle you with natural beauty, so don't miss your chance to check it out first hand during your upcoming RV vacation.

One of the nation's newest National Monuments, the Carrizo Plain is located just 60 miles east of San Luis Obispo. Home to stunning views of the famous San Andreas Fault, the Carrizo Plains National Monument is often referred to as California's "Serengeti". Sprawled across a mix of wetlands and grass areas, the Carrizo Plain is approximately 45 miles long and 10 miles wide, providing a wide variety of endangered species with protected habitat and ecosystems. Until recently the Carrizo Plains were dominated by ranching and farming, destroying much of the area's local vitality and environmental significance. In 1988 The Nature Conservancy, along with numerous federal, state and county agencies, rallied together to save this important patch of California terrain, purchasing 82,000 acres from and out-of-state land and oil company. The Nature Conservancy later partnered with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in order to further ensure the safety of the park. Named a National Monument in 2001, the Carrizo Plains are continually evolving, providing RV rental travelers with an exciting outlet of outdoor fun.

The Carrizo Plains National Monument is proud to provide RV rental travelers with a wide variety of facilities and recreation activities, including everything from hiking and camping to wildlife viewing and educational programs. Located off of Highway 58, the Carrizo Plains Preserve is open from sunrise to sunset, providing RV rental travelers with hours of outdoor excitement and activity. If you're planning on visiting the Carrizo Plains National Monument during your upcoming RV vacation please feel free to contact the Guy L. Goodwin Education Center at (805) 475-2131 for more details. This center, which is open Thursday through Sunday, 9:00am to 4:00pm, December through May, features a knowledgeable staff as well as interactive displays and colorful brochures. (If you're planning on visiting the Monument between June and November please call the Bureau of Land Management at (661) 391-6000 for more details).

**Carrizo Plain Visitors' Guide**





The Carrizo Plain National Monument from four different views in the summertime.

# The Plain, Unearthed

*With the Carrizo Plain National Monument, “the closer you get, the more you see.”*

**Text and photos by Janelle Eastridge**

**D**riving down Seven Mile Road, the Carrizo Plain doesn't look like much. Well, to be more precise (and fair), it doesn't look like much at midday in July, after the scorching summer sun has begun to take its toll. Here, temperatures hover around 105 degrees, and any amount of rainfall is a cause for celebration.

The road into the heart of the national monument, like nearly every other one contained within its approximately 250,000 acres of land, is mostly dirt, and the landscape, at least to the untrained eye, appears to be “basically the same shade of brown for a while — I've never seen so much of nothing,” as the German exchange student accompanying me described it. “Yeah, it's the contrast of the bright-white lake and the desolate ground that makes it so, uh, boring,” added my younger brother, who also made the hour-long trek from Bakersfield with us.

But as we soon found out, with the Carrizo Plain National Monument, “the closer you look, the more you see.” (Web sites, a pamphlet

from the Visitor's Center, and signs throughout the premise had promised us that this would be the case. And don't you worry, they're right.)

With Maricopa to the southeast, Taft to the east, Ojai to the southwest and Atascadero to the northwest, the Carrizo Plain lies nestled between the Temblor and Caliente mountain ranges. In January 1988, The Nature Conservancy bought 82,000 acres of land from Oppenheimer Industries. That same year and the next, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received 51,500 acres of land. And in January of 2001, former President Bill Clinton granted the Carrizo Plain national monument status due to the fact that it contains the “largest remaining remnants of the original San Joaquin Valley habitat,” as per the BLM's Carrizo Plain National Monument Web site. In other words, if you've ever wondered what the San Joaquin Valley looked like 300 years ago, before agriculture and urban sprawl took over, then the Carrizo Plain is the place to go.

Today, the BLM, the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, and private landowners hold the rights to the Carrizo Plain National Monument, with the first three groups acting as what Johna Hurl, manager of the national monument, refers to as its managing partners.

As the story goes, the “Carrizo” part of the monument's name refers to the grass that once grew so tall in this area that it touched the bellies of early settlers' horses as they rode through the plain. Before that, the area was called “llano estero,” in reference to the area's landmark salt marsh, and later the name was changed to Carrisa Plains. After the managing partners acquired the land, the name was changed back to Carrizo Plain.

Yearly, the national monument attracts about 30,000 visitors, with most of

these visitors touring the Plain from December through May. (It's still beautiful in the summer, though!) The Carrizo Plain National Monument is home to a number of endangered, threatened, and rare species of animals, including the San Joaquin kit fox, the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, the giant kangaroo rat, and the San Joaquin antelope squirrel. It also carries with it a history that dates back to prehistoric times, when the Chumash, Yokuts, and other Native Americans used to trade, hunt, and conduct religious ceremonies on the land. (More on this later.)

As a Bakersfield native who spent many summers playing in the Pismo waves and who just recently graduated from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, I had traveled state Highways 58 and 166 many, many times. (Both of these highways pass entrances to the Plain.) And every time I've driven by Soda Lake Road I've felt the tiny tug of curiosity prompting me to someday discover Soda Lake and the rest of the Plain for myself. At The (San Luis Obispo) Tribune, where I worked as an intern last year, I read several stories that mentioned the Carrizo Plain National Monument. But for me, as I think it does for most people, the Plain remained a mystery.

That is, until I decided to take a self-guided tour — easily downloaded via the BLM's Web site — with the German and my brother. Narrated by Hurl, the tour takes visitors to three major points of interest in the Carrizo Plain: Soda Lake, the Visitor's Center, and Wallace Creek. So we made sure we had enough fuel in the car, since we knew that the nearest gas station would be *at least* 25 miles away in Maricopa, and plenty of water, for obvious reasons, and embarked on our very own Carrizo Plain road trip.

## Stop 1: Soda Lake Overlook

**A**s the centerpiece of the national monument, Soda Lake is impressive — a massive expanse of nearly blinding-white mineral deposits shimmering in the bright summer sun, set against varying shades of green from the surrounding shrubs and brown from, well, the dirt. The landscape looks as though a giant baking soda explosion has occurred time and time again. It's beautiful, and for that, you can thank Mother Nature herself.

About 30 million years ago, movement along the San Andreas and San Juan fault lines caused the bordering Temblor and Caliente mountain ranges to rise and the land in between to form the shallow basin now known as Soda Lake, the lowest point in the Carrizo Plain. At one point in time, runoff from the plain drained into the Salinas River in the north. But now, thanks to the San Andreas Fault, water that trickles down into the lake during the winter months from elsewhere in the plain evaporates, and with nowhere else to go, it leaves behind “a glistening expanse of sulfate and carbonate salts that appear to ripple and sway in the heat waves of the summer,” a sign at the top of the lookout informed us.

(Side note: Yep, we were fooled by that “mirage in the desert” effect. We thought we saw the “water” of the lake shimmering a few miles away as we first drove down Seven Mile Road's bumpy surface. It was, in fact, much further and of a different substance than we originally thought.)

In the plain's more recent history, salt was once collected and refined, and the sodium sulfate was then used in the manufacturing of detergent, craft paper, textiles, and glass. Evidence of this past life on the lake is apparent.

As the first stop of this self-guided tour, the Soda Lake Overlook provides perhaps the best and most wide-reaching view of the lake. “One of the largest undisturbed alkali wetlands in the state” (also gleaned from the sign), Soda Lake is about five miles long and half-a-mile to two miles wide. It has a surface area of more than 3,000 acres and 102 miles of shoreline. Again, this main feature of the plain is impressive. At this vista, one can also easily see the two plains that comprise the larger Carrizo Plain: the Elkhorn and the Carrizo. Confusing? Yeah, just a little, but it all makes sense seen from the bird's-eye view of the overlook, where one can see both of the plains, uh, plainly. Soda Lake, due to its high concentration of salt, supports certain salt-tolerant animals, including small brine shrimp, and plants, such as iodine bush, which grows adjacent to the lake, spiny saltbush, and alkali larkspur.



Soda Lake, the national monument's focal point, is one of the largest undisturbed alkali wetlands in California.

## A New Land Trust Established on the Carrizo Plain

By Neil Havlik

Formal establishment of a new land trust in San Luis Obispo County, known as the Carrizo Plain Conservancy, has been announced by the organization's President, Neil Havlik. The new land trust was formed in recognition of new opportunities and needs arising in association with the establishment of the two solar power generating facilities on the Northern Carrizo Plain.

According to Havlik, the permitting process for the solar facilities, and settlement of citizen litigation that followed the permitting process, has led to a new wave of conservation efforts in the Carrizo Plain area. This includes acquisition of approximately 36,000 acres of land near the solar facilities for conservation purposes, in addition to 5,000 more acres within the solar facilities' owned lands which are also dedicated to habitat conservation.

"The Carrizo Plain Conservancy has been established to build upon the new wave of habitat conservation associated with the advent of the solar facilities and to focus efforts on continuing, expanding, and diversifying that conservation effort" said Havlik. "The organization will be focusing on conservation of additional property in and around the Carrizo Plain National Monument and the new State-owned and privately-owned conservation lands, enhancing the wildlife habitat value of those lands, and providing research and educational opportunities for the public."

The Carrizo Plain Conservancy, or CPC, was incorporated in late 2013, and in December held its first Board meeting. In addition to Havlik, the organization's Board includes Vice President Herb Stroh of San Luis Obispo, Secretary Stephnie Wald of Oceano, Treasurer Anne Fairchild of California Valley, and Directors LynneDee Althouse of Paso Robles, Brian Boroski of Fresno, Doug Campbell of Santa Barbara, and Dorothy Jennings of Templeton.

"Board members all have a common love of and interest in the Carrizo Plain" said Board Secretary Stephnie Wald, "and we all look forward to a rewarding tenure on the Board of CPC."

Havlik said the group owes a great deal of thanks to a number of local entities, especially the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, which assisted in developing the articles of incorporation, bylaws, and other necessary documents for the new organization, and to North County Watch, whose efforts to improve the conservation components of the solar facilities' mitigation requirements led to a larger area of conserved land and improved efforts at restoration and resource enhancement. The solar companies have been supportive of the concept of a local land trust and have indicated a desire to work with CPC into the future.

"We also look forward to working with the Federal Bureau of Land Management, the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the County of San Luis Obispo, and to other nonprofit organizations operating in the Carrizo Plain area, in order to support and facilitate ongoing conservation and restoration efforts in the area," Wald said.

The new organization can be contacted at P.O. Box 274, San Luis Obispo, CA. 93406. A website is at [www.carrizoplainconservancy.org](http://www.carrizoplainconservancy.org), and recognition as a tax-exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service has recently been received. Further information on the groups goals and projects can be obtained by calling 805-801-3416.

## Carrizo Plain National Monument is a natural laboratory for studying the Geology of Earthquakes

By Sinan O. Akciz, Ph.D., University of California, Irvine

We establish some of our biggest cities right next to major faults. As we populate them, we bring in water and energy from other places and build infrastructure across these faults. We take advantage of the slowness of geological processes and carry on with our hectic daily lives and forget about nature's forces. After all, scientists can't really tell where and when the next big or damaging earthquake will occur, right?

While we still can't predict earthquakes, we have come a long way in the past few decades in terms of understanding how the ground will shake at a particular location after an earthquake if we know (a) the fault the earthquake has occurred on, (b) its magnitude, and (c) the direction in which the rupture propagated. We can run sophisticated simulations on supercomputers and produce a near-infinite number of analyses for each possible earthquake scenario. We compare the model results to earthquakes that have been recorded instrumentally and fine-tune the numerous assumptions that need to be made about the subsurface geology of the region where the earthquake has occurred.

Data about the possible magnitudes and direction of the rupture, however, is not easy to provide (thus the large number of model iterations that need to be run). Our best guess about what the next earthquake along a particular section of a fault will look like is based on our characterization of how large earthquakes occurred along that section of the fault in the past. This data, as you can imagine, is difficult to collect and interpret in a straight-forward way. Such data is collected by paleoseismologists, who dig trenches as deep as 17 feet across the fault of interest and document and interpret the geological evidence created by old surface-rupturing earthquakes that is preserved in the soil record. These records are hard to come by, because (a) unless the sedimentation rate is just right, earthquake evidence either erodes away (when sedimentation rate is too slow) or gets buried too deep to be exposed by a backhoe (when sedimentation rate is too fast), (b) even if the earthquake evidence is well-preserved, there is often not enough datable material to determine when the earthquakes occurred.

Some of the best paleoseismological data of any known fault in the world is collected from within the Carrizo Plain. Geological evidence for strike-slip faulting is preserved remarkably well, thanks to the protection of the land as a National Monument. In addition, there are lots of locations within the Carrizo Plain where the sedimentation rate is just fast enough that you can unequivocally identify each earthquake without questioning the completeness of the earthquake record preserved in these sediments. There is plenty of charcoal carried into the plain from the Temblors, which enables the precise dating of these individual earthquakes. In addition, the Carrizo Plain has many old river channels that are disrupted and offset by earthquakes, which enables us to study how big these past earthquakes were by measuring how much the channel shifted.

Ongoing research along the Carrizo Section of the San Andreas Fault is shedding new light on the past behavior of this section of the fault. New data indicate that ~ 4,000 years ago the San Andreas Fault was moving at a rate similar to the current slip rate of ~36 mm/yr. New data also suggest that earthquakes that ruptured the Carrizo Plain occurred on average every  $88 \pm 41$  years, which is a lot more frequently than previously thought. However, this data also indicate that not all earthquakes were similar in magnitude to the great Fort Tejon earthquake of 1857. But which ones were big and most damaging? Which ones were small? Which ones had epicenters near Parkfield? Which ones were the tailends of ruptures that originated further southeast? All these questions remain unanswered and during the investigation process, new ones will undoubtedly emerge. The Carrizo Plain National Monument will continue to provide new scientific discoveries and remain one of the most valuable natural laboratories for studying past earthquakes. We thank the residents of the Carrizo Plain and the Bureau of Land Management for their continued support to our research, which not only helps southern California to be better prepared for future earthquakes, but also helps us better understand earthquakes occurring along strike-slip faults elsewhere in the world which may not have as high-quality geological data as the San Andreas Fault.



Offset stream channel at Wallace Creek

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### Maricopa Shell



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5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

## The Carrizo Plain – fact sheet –

<b>Size:</b> 250, 000 acres total; 45 miles long, 10 miles wide	<b>Location:</b> 65 miles from San Luis Obispo, 25 miles from Maricopa; accessible via state Highways 58 and 166	<b>Points of Interest :</b> Soda Lake, Painted Rock, Wallace Creek (best place to view evidence of San Andreas Fault activity), and the Goodwin Education Center. The Goodwin Education Center open 12-4-2014 and closes May 30, 2015.	<b>Plants:</b> Several rare and sensitive plant species, including the California jewel flower, Hoover's woolly-star, San Joaquin woolly threads, pale-yellow layia, forked fiddleneck, Carrizo peppergrass, Lost Hills saltbush, Temblor buckwheat, recurved larkspur, and Munz's tidy-tips	<b>Animals:</b> Several threatened, endangered, and unique species, including the San Joaquin kit fox, California condor, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, longhorn fairy shrimp, vernal pool fairy shrimp, pronghorn antelope and tule elk
<b>National Monument Status:</b> Designated as a national monument by former President William Clinton on Jan. 3, 2001				
<b>Other Interesting Facts:</b> * Only four percent of California's native grasslands remain – the Carrizo Plains account for a great deal of this, supporting native bunchgrass, needle-grass and blue grass. * More endangered species of animals and plant life live on the Carrizo Plains than anywhere else in California. This includes the California jewel flower, the San Joaquin kit fox, the blunt-nosed leopard lizard and the giant kangaroo rat. * Numerous species of endangered animals have been reintroduced to the Carrizo Plains over the past 15 years. These include the native tule elk and the pronghorn. Today there are just less than 100 pronghorns on the plain and well over 200 tule elk.				

# Painted Rock



A view of Painted Rock on the Carrizo Plain National Monument

Painted Rock, a horseshoe-shaped monolith rock formation, stands about 55 feet above the high plain adjacent to the Caliente Mountain Range. The geologic formation is a sedimentary rock called sandstone. This sandstone is of marine origin formed about 25 million years during the Miocene Epoch. An ancient river flowing northwestward carved the central portion (saddle) of Painted



Rock during the Pleistocene (Ice Age).

The Chumash, Yokuts, and other native peoples lived, hunted and traded in this central region of California. Painted Rock, a special place to the native peoples, is recognized as one of the most important rock painting (pictograph) sites in the United States. Some of the lifeways of the American Indian use of Painted Rock is sacred as they continue to express through their visitations to the site.

At Painted Rock, three colors dominate the paintings; red, black and white. The red ochre is made from hematite, a

mineral found locally. Pigment for black paint was made from wood charcoal. The source for white paint comes from diatomaceous shale and/or gypsum, both minerals found locally in the Monument. Animal fat or oil extracted from crushed plant seeds, whites of bird eggs, or milkweed may have served as a binder for making paints. Paint was applied to the rock surface by finger or with a fibrous plant stick.

The paintings were done over a long period of time, with some paintings superimposed or painted over previously painted images. The paintings are estimated to be from 200 to 3000 years old. The pictographs exhibit a diverse and intricate style that has been long and widely recognized as among the most impressive in North America. Unfortunately, vandalism ranging from graffiti to gunshot impacts over the past 100 years has destroyed or severely damaged some of the rock paintings. Wind and water erosion, and other natural occurrences such as bird excretions and honeybee activity have also damaged the preservation of the rock paintings.

Please help us protect Painted Rock, a cultural resource of the American Indians of California and a special place for future generations of people to enjoy and benefit. The native peoples today are actively involved in the management and preservation of Painted Rock.

No hunting or shooting is allowed in the area of Painted Rock or along the trail for one-quarter (1/4) mile radius. Pets are not allowed at Painted Rock. Please BEWARE of rattlesnakes and honeybees at Painted Rock and along the



Left: Painted Rock 1891. Above: The entrance to Painted Rock

trail.

Federal Laws make it illegal to excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface (or attempt to do aforementioned activities) archaeological resources located on public land. Any person found in violation of the Archaeological Resource Protection Act could be fined not more than \$100,000, or imprisoned not more than five years, or both. Please report any violations to archaeological resources to the Bakersfield BLM Office (661) 391-6000. Thanks for helping us preserve California's heritage resources.

# A History of a Special Place

by Craig Deutsche

Today the Carrizo Plain National Monument is a place of open space and overwhelming quiet. This was not always so, and even as recently as forty years ago you might hear the thumping of electric generators working at the ranches or the sound of tractors making rounds in the fields. Wheat was grown on the flats, and cattle grazed on the more hilly ground. The years between 1940 and 1960 were the most prosperous, but few people outside the valley knew of this valley. It was a story waiting to be told.

Jackie Czaplá runs the Visitor Center in the Monument, and in 2008, she and I began a project to collect oral histories from the people who had once worked this land. Finding the stories was something of a treasure hunt. One person would tell us of another person we should meet, and then he (or she) would direct us to still another. There were also instances of pure serendipity. In 1991 Nancy Warner, a contractor with the Nature Conservancy, interviewed six old-time residents about early flora on the Plain. Her cassette tapes were forgotten and were only re-discovered when I asked a BLM archeologist if she could check in an old file drawer. The tapes were to become part of our project to be transcribed and saved. The persons interviewed on those tapes were already elderly in 1991, and they recalled memories from the very first years of the twentieth century.

Perhaps the most astonishing discovery was a taped interview with Nancy Wright Traver. It was made by several younger family members in 1970, only a few years before her death. Nancy was wife of Lew Traver who owned a ranch in the center part of the Plain. Their house and much of their farm equipment are easily seen along Soda Lake Road in the Monument today.

Nancy Wright was born in 1876 in Ad-elaide, California. Her father managed cattle, and her mother managed four children and their two-room wooden house. Water was drawn from a well in buckets; laundry was done on a washboard alongside the creek; cooking was done on a wood-burning stove; and light at night was provided by either kerosene lanterns, candles, or simply a dish of oil with a string in it. Once a year the family made the two day journey by wagon to Cayucos to purchase supplies: salt, one sack of sugar, four sacks of flour, and various small hardware items. Everything else they had to provide on their own. Returning from one of these trips, they found that their house had burned



to the ground. The only surviving property was her father's saddle which had been on the porch and escaped the flames. The clothing and the quilts which Nancy's mother had made were among the lost possessions. The family rebuilt and started over.

In the recording Nancy goes on to tell of a diphtheria epidemic, of drought, of her schooling, of the various jobs she held, and of her marriage. She was already fifty-two years old when her family moved to the north end of the Carrizo Plain. Nancy was sixty-four when her husband bought what is now called the Traver Ranch on the present Monument. The recording was, and is, a chronicle of California pioneer life from the time of candles to the age of television.

These discovered recordings were the exception. More commonly we were given the name of someone we might wish to interview, and then we set out to find them. When I placed a telephone call, I calculated that I had three sentences to persuade the person that I wasn't crazy, one minute to persuade them that the project was real and interesting, and then five



minutes to persuade them to be interviewed themselves. I dropped names shamelessly, names of people who referred me, and names and histories of neighbors that they had once known. In fact, nearly everyone we met has been intrigued and ultimately glad to tell of their experiences and their family.

There were stories of the strong community at the north end of the Plain: Farm Bureau meetings, school functions, Halloween parties, and dances. Other interviews described in detail how dryland farming was done. There were anecdotes about a whiskey still during prohibition, about childhood adventures, and about farm accidents and rattlesnakes. The south end of the Plain is drier, and the people who lived there were more widely separated. There was no tight community as there was in the north, and it became more difficult to locate the former residents. Nevertheless, many of their stories were of the same kind.

To date, Jackie and I have interviewed 130 persons, and the recordings along with their transcripts have been archived in several different libraries including those at Cal Poly State University, at Taft College, and the Bancroft Library in Berkeley. While we take a great deal of satisfaction in this, our real reward was unexpected. As we became familiar with the history of the valley, the meetings became more like conversations than interviews. In some cases we were able to put people in touch with others of their family that had become lost. In my case, several of these persons have become personal friends, and I have been privileged to become part of their community. Although tractors no longer work the fields and fences are falling down, the history of the Carrizo Plain is very much alive.

## Vernal Pools of the Carrizo Plain

By David Chipping

The floor of the Carrizo Plain contains a small number of ephemeral wetlands that exist only during the winter and spring before drying up. "Vernal" means appearing or occurring in spring. The pools contain a number of species of animals and plants that are dependent on the annual cycle of submergence and desiccation, and which also can survive dry years such as 2008 and 2009 in which there is hardly any rainfall.

The geologic origins of the Carrizo Plain's pools vary. Some form due to recent geologic deformation near the San Andreas Fault, but the most important group of pools lies in the lowest valley topography north of the Carrizo Plain National Monument, especially in the central area of Belmont Trail and near Seven Mile Road. The surface of the land is gently dimpled, the hollows being less than a foot or so below the surrounding higher ground, and the dimples being about the size of a table-tennis table. They can be spotted in the summer by the presence of white salty clay and the dried out remains of algal and bacterial mats that look like blackened peered paint on the white background, and in the winter by rather muddy water. The muddiness is due to the teeming life of the pool that must be born, grow to maturity, mate and deposit seeds, cysts, and future offspring before the pool dries and the killing summer heat returns.

The Belmont Trail pools share an origin with Soda Lake itself. Both are deflation hollows, blown from the floor of the valley by the north-west winds. The general ease of wind excavation can be viewed in the summer in the form of myriad dust devils riding the hot winds. Soda Lake itself is a giant wind-blown hollow, with the dust being deposited and trapped on the southwest side of the lake by the vegetation of the "clay dune" along Simmler Road. The scale of the vernal pools is much smaller, but the high spots around the pools are the consequence of dust caught in vegetation.

Why does water stay in the hollows? There is a relatively thin clay seal a few inches beneath the surface. A story is told of a Cal Poly Soil Science student who, many years ago, attempted to take a soil core from the bottom of a filled pool with an auger, only to watch aghast as the entire pool drained into the subsurface through the newly cut hole.

Today such destruction would violate Federal law, as the pools contain endangered species and the habitat destruction would be an illegal "taking" of protected species. These are the Longhorn fairy shrimp and, potentially, the Vernal Pool fairy shrimp. These tiny crustaceans deposit eggs as cysts at the end of their extremely short lives, and these remain in the dried mud to hatch during the next submergence, and for this reason walking in dried out pools can cause harm to this species and should be avoided.

Larger pools may be used by Spadefoot Toads as hatching sites of tadpoles, the adults then reburying themselves during the dry times. A number of very interesting plants are also found in the pools.

Vernal pool plants germinate when water is in the pool, and start their lives underwater. They usually flower and set seed as they emerge during the drying of the pool. The high spots around the pools allow goldfields and owl's clover to ring the pools, but these are not the true denizens of the pools. Most of these, such as Mousetail and Water Starwort, are very small and not very colorful, but while none are unique to the Carrizo Plain, all are relatively uncommon due to the inherent rarity of the habitat.

There are probably half a dozen or so of these interesting plants that will have you down on your knees with a hand lens as you introduce yourself. •

*Dr. Chipping is Professor Emeritus of Geology at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and President of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. He is Vice President of The Friends of the Carrizo Plain Board of Directors.*



Vernal Pool Photo by Paul G. Johnson 4/7/2005

### The Big Check

*The Friends of Carrizo Plain received a check in amount of \$10,000 from First Solar, builders of the Topaz Solar Power Facility in the Carrizo Plain, in July 2013. Here several FOCF Board members and management staff at the Topaz facility share the ceremonial handing over the check. The funds are being used to design and build a series of informational kiosks with the Carrizo Plain National Monument informing visitors about various natural and cultural features of the Monument. FOCF greatly thanks First Solar for this financial support.*

14

## Carrizo Plain Native Baskets May Be A Dream

By Earl Bates

The curious visitor of the Carrizo Plain National Monument may wonder about the history of native baskets in the area.

Baskets woven by native Californians have seen a revival of popularity in recent years; today many weavers are re-discovering and practicing the basket making techniques of the native peoples of the many regions across the state. Some of the most beautiful artifacts of early California are the baskets that were meticulously woven by indigenous people. The remaining examples of the baskets are an indication of the intimate associations the people developed with plants, their ethnobotanics. Many of the baskets seem to be a testament to a concern for combining a fine sense of aesthetics with consummate practicality. Native baskets may have played a role in the history of the Carrizo Plain area, but specific evidence is sparse.

"Nothing at all is known of basket making in that area, I doubt that any baskets were made there or materials collected there," said Jan Timbrook, curator of ethnography at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Classic southern coastal region baskets, made by the Chumash, were woven of juncos rush, mainly in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. Hoover's flora of San Luis Obispo County indicates that *Juncus textilis* is only known at two locations in that county, and neither are anywhere near the Carrizo Plain, said Timbrook. "Any people who visited the area would have brought baskets with them from home, or traded for baskets made elsewhere."

Another question concerns the native cultural history of the Carrizo Plain. "As far as I know, it's not quite clear in whose territory the Carrizo Plain should be included," said Timbrook. In this area the cultural boundaries have not been established with certainty and were likely somewhat fluid over time. Chumash, Salinan and Yokut all probably visited the area seasonally for hunting, gathering or ceremony. Some people claim the rock art at Painted Rock shows some Yokut influence, but nobody lived there year around. There are plenty of Chumash village names in the La Panza Range and the Cuyama, but down in the plain itself there's only one placename, K'owshup, and its actual location is unclear, she said.

Chumash baskets are considered by many to be the finest from native California, perhaps some baskets made their way from the Santa Barbara area into the Carrizo Plain, they might have been carried as practical traveling equipment or trade items.

"Baskets are really emblematic of a lot of the relationships the Chumash have with the natural world," said Timbrook. Designs for Chumash baskets came in through a visioning practice with the natural world. "I have talked with a number of weavers and they say sometimes the basket gets a mind of its own, like it is the one that actually determines how it comes out," she said. "I think it's very likely that designs for baskets came to Chumash women in their dreams, but I'm not sure how characteristic that would be of basket weavers in native California in general."

Basket designs dreamed into the world long ago by a Chumash woman might have included visions from a walk across the coastal mountains and a visit under the sky of the Carrizo Plain.

15



### Visit the Taft Chamber of Commerce Carrizo Plain Visitors Center



Information On The Carrizo Plain  
Maps of the Carrizo Plain National Monument

Taft, California  
"Gateway to the Carrizo Plain"  
400 Kern Street, Taft, CA 93268 (661) 765-2166.





# Carrizo Plain National Monument

## Legend

### Land Ownership

- US Bureau of Land Management
- US Forest Service
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- State Lands
- Private Lands
- No Shooting Zone
- Open Camping Area
- Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Wilderness Study Area
- San Andreas Fault
- County Maintained Roads
- Paved County Roads
- Open Roads
- Administrative Use Only
- Closed to Vehicle Use
- Foot Trail
- ? Information Board



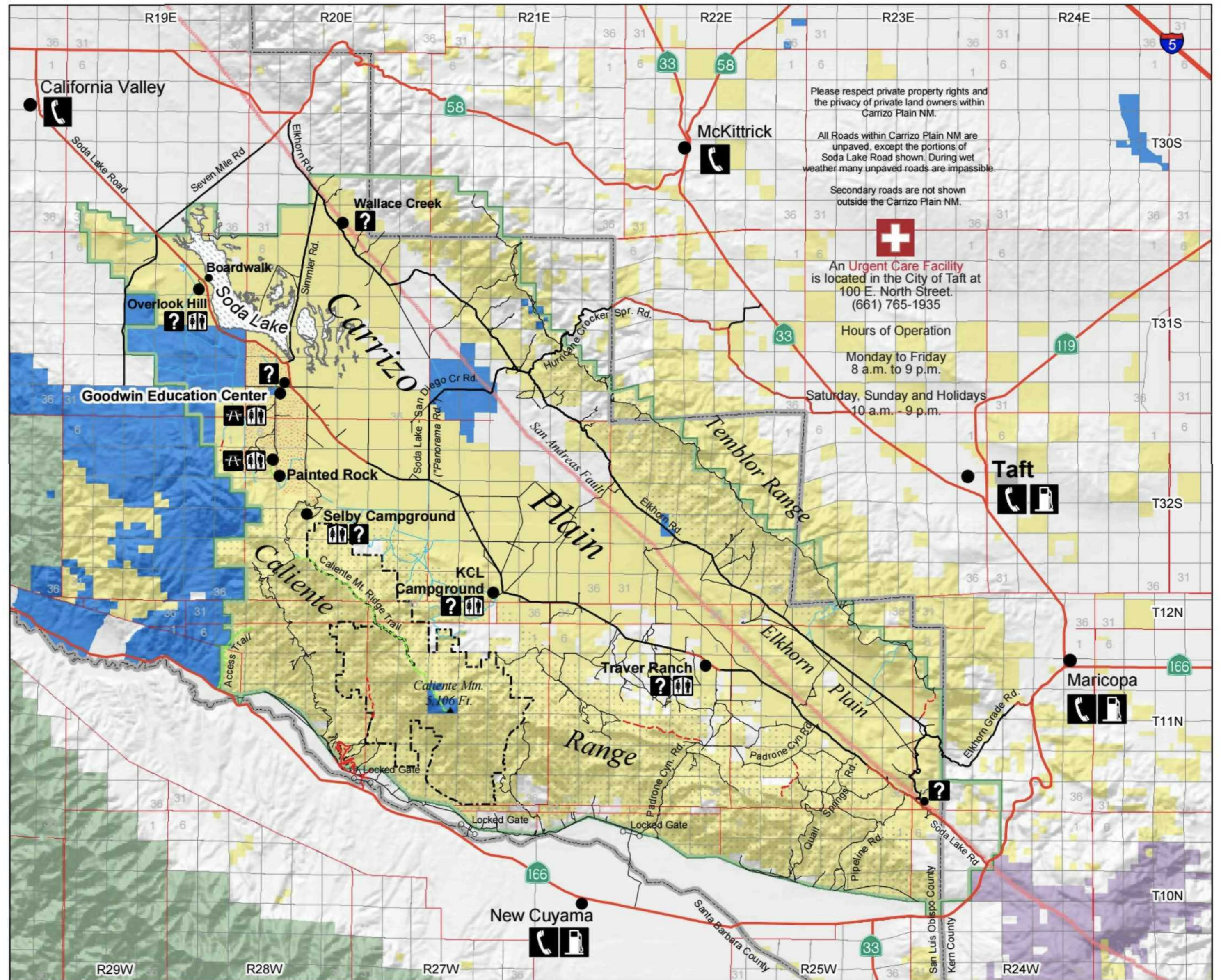
Location Map

Bureau of Land Management  
Bakersfield Field Office  
3801 Pegasus Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93308. 661-391-6000  
[www.ca.blm.gov/bakersfield](http://www.ca.blm.gov/bakersfield)

Goodwin Education Center  
(Open December - May: Phone 805-475-2131)



Revised: November 15, 2006



Please respect private property rights and the privacy of private land owners within Carrizo Plain NM.

All Roads within Carrizo Plain NM are unpaved, except the portions of Soda Lake Road shown. During wet weather many unpaved roads are impassible.

Secondary roads are not shown outside the Carrizo Plain NM.



An Urgent Care Facility is located in the City of Taft at 100 E. North Street. (661) 765-1935

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday  
8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday and Holidays  
10 a.m. - 9 p.m.

## The Composition of Caliente Mountain

By David Chipping

Caliente Mountain is the highest spot in San Luis Obispo County and the most prominent topographic feature in CPNM besides Soda Lake. The mountain has had a complicated history if you consider the rocks within its mass, but is a relatively young in terms of its mountain topography.

The rocks sit on a basement raft of granite and metamorphic rocks of the "Salinian Block", none of which come to the surface within the CPNM. The rocks are quite strong and brittle, in contrast to the weak basement rocks below the Temblor Range. The basement rocks east of the San Andreas fault were once in a marine trench and subduction zone where seafloor was crushed below the western edge of North America. The granite basement west of the fault was torn off the western edge of the continent somewhere near the current Salton Sea area, and can be thought of as a displaced southern extension of the Sierra Nevada. If you think of two railroad cars,



once in line, being uncoupled and parked side by side, you have the big picture. Due to the 'big bend' on the San Andreas fault, rocks moving to the northwest on the Pacific Plate are subjected to compression as they nudge up against the more westerly trend of the 'big bend'. Compression squishes rocks, and causes shortening, but the manner of deformation depends on the strength of the basement rocks on the bottom of the pile. The younger sedimentary rocks above the basement are also subjected to shortening. The rocks on the east side were crumpled into the Temblor Range due to their weak basement rocks becoming highly compressed, but the rocks on the west side remained relatively un-crumpled as the granitic basement wasn't so 'squishy'. The west side experienced shortening as the basement rocks broke into slivers that overrode each other as thrust faults. Caliente Mountain is basically an eastward tilted slab of sedimentary rocks.

Many of the younger rocks in the pile are not very strong and have been eroded off the surface of the slab as it rises like a trap door with a 'hinge' at the base of the eastern slope. The upper rim of the slab is the crest of the Caliente Mountain ridge. At Caliente Mountain the Painted Rock Member of the Vaqueros Formation (guess where you can see it!) is a strong sandstone that shelters rocks below it from erosion and forms the sloping surface of the slab. The southern part of the range around Padrone Spring has several beds of lava higher on the stratigraphic sequence defining the tilted slab. If you cross the Caliente ridge from east to west at Padrone Spring, you drop through increasingly older rocks from the Pliocene-Pleistocene Morales Formation to those of the Vaqueros and Simmler Formations of Oligocene age (around 25-30 million years ago). Those sit on even older marine deposits as old as 60 million years, but which are still deeply buried except in the extreme south of the range.

There is a recurring theme in the geology, and that is evidence of a persistent coastal environment. At several levels there are transitions between 'continental' rocks formed on land as alluvial fans, beach and deltaic deposits inter-fingering with rocks containing marine fossils. An example is the Monterey Formation, represented in this area by the Branch Canyon sandstone which is a shallow marine or shoreline deposit, compared to the much deeper marine diatom-rich deposits seen to the west. The continental Caliente Formation is also the same age as deep marine deposits further to the west.

Continental sediments may have a red color if weathered in semi tropical conditions, and that coloration is evident in the Caliente Formation exposures at Padrone Spring. This is a great place to see the upper section of strata on the tilted trap door. The rocks underlying the road into the spring and the low hills behind Traver Ranch are Morales Formation, not too different from the sediments being washed to the valley floor today. Beneath those, near where you will park to walk into the springs, are old lake bed deposits of the Quatal Formation, followed by the older basalt lavas (15 million year old) and the Caliente Formation. The Caliente Formation has been eroded into some impressive badlands.

There are several different basaltic lavas in the area, and they imply that the area was once subjected to 'pull-apart' tensional faulting that enable both the melting of the deep crust and the cracks that enabled the lava to rise to the surface. This was probably enabled by tearing as the Salinian block slid past the rest of North America. At Padrone Spring you will walk through a narrow gap in one of the lava beds into a bowl that is closed off to the west by the main Caliente Mountain ridge. This ridge is held up by thick, erosion-resistant, basaltic flows.

The trap door analogy is not perfect, as the Morales Formation east of the entrance to the Padrone water gap has been folded into a broad syncline fold, so that eastward dipping beds at the entrance to the spring become eastward dipping beds in the hills behind Traver Ranch. This is the Wells Ranch syncline.

I encourage a visit to Padrone Spring, as it is the road less travelled. Road conditions can vary with the seasons and recency of grading.

**Illustration:** A color-enhanced screen shot of Google Earth's view of the Padrone Spring area. The roads on the right lie in the Wells Ranch syncline, and the spring is at the westernmost location where a road stub passes through the eastward tilted continental redbeds of the Quatal Formation and ends at the dark basalt and the spring. To the west there is more Quatal badland. The brushy highlands in the center of the picture are held up by a thick basaltic lava, which lies above a very eroded mass of Branch Canyon Sandstone and Vaqueros Formation on the right side of the picture.

*Dr. Chipping is Professor Emeritus of Geology at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and President of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. He is Vice President of The Friends of the Carrizo Plain Board of Directors.*

## The Carrizo Plain: A Return to Early California

by Craig Deutsche

It is a place sufficient to itself where humans, when they are wise, tread lightly. Farmers have come and left. Cattle once grazed the hills and are now in decline. Throughout all this, the native residents persist – hawks soaring in the blue sky, ravens stalking old fields, pronghorn grazing on the plain, and meadowlarks singing on old fence posts. Only the dust cloud drifting above the distant road speaks of human presence. When darkness arrives the outline changes, but the story is the same. Auto headlights may catch a fox, a kangaroo rat, a mouse, or ground squirrel, all out hunting after the day's heat. Somewhere in the dark there will be the yipping and howl of a family of coyotes – a surreal symphony that comes from near and far and nowhere. In half an hour of driving there may be no other car on the road,



*The author Craig Deutsche stands in front of Soda Lake in the distance.* and the light from the distant ranch house seems to come no nearer. The Carrizo Plain National Monument was created to protect endangered species, but the land is a magical place, and humans are only visitors. Time seems to be of no consequence in this vast space.

As the central valley of California became settled in the 1870's, the Carrizo Plain, hidden between the Temblor Range to the east and coastal mountains on the west, drew farmers and ranchers. With less than ten inches of rain a year, farming has always been difficult. Windmills and wells are the principal sources of water, and dryland farming was all that was possible. Today the upper limits of the plowed land can be seen in the slight traces of disturbed soil, and beside the old ranch houses you see pieces of rusting farm machinery - hay rakes, a disk, a wooden combine, and parts of a broken truck. In the late afternoon light, the falling houses, grain tanks, and elevators cast empty shadows that speak of the past. Corporate ranching and falling prices eventually ended grain farming in the Carrizo Plain. Prospects were more promising for cattle, and at one time fences divided the valley and went up into the hills both east and west. Although cattle grazing continues today on a very limited scale, falling fences, cattle guards, and occasional water tanks and troughs are testament to the difficulty of even this livelihood.

I first learned of the monument when the superintendent, Marlene Braun, spoke at a meeting of a small Sierra Club group. I offered to organize volunteers to provide some sort of service to the monument staff. In the ten years since then, the number and variety of projects has grown. My appreciation of the Carrizo as a special place has grown as well. I have been impressed by the staff of the monument, both the professionals and the volunteers, and have returned many times.

The greatest number of projects were organized to remove the barbed wire left from the ranching legacy. The volunteers have included Sierra Club groups, one group from Desert Survivors (an environmental group), and two student groups who were fulfilling community service obligations. Although some cattle grazing allotments still exist within the monument, these are rather few and are managed for the benefit of the wildlife habitat. Most of the old fences are unneeded, and besides being a bit unsightly, they inhibit the freedom of the pronghorn antelope which have been re-introduced after being hunted out in the nineteenth century. Strangely, the pronghorn will not jump over a fence. They evolved in flat plains where there is nothing that requires jumping, and so instead they attempt to crawl under the wires. When pursued by coyotes, the fences may create a significant handicap for the chase.

The first step in removing a fence should be obvious: put on heavy leather gloves. Then one member of the crew uses a bolt cutter to release the barbed wire from the poles. Several others follow along the fence line, cut the wire into suitable lengths, and assemble it into manageable rolls. Two more persons follow with a specialized jack to lift the poles out of the ground, and finally the crew will carry the poles and the rolled wire to a nearby road to be collected at a later time for disposal. And so the crew moves along the fence for a good part of the day. Certainly there are times to stop for lunch, to talk, to reorganize, and to rest. There is a great deal of satisfaction in arriving at a fence line in the morning, and then leaving an empty field that afternoon. A part of the pleasure, as one participant put it, is in knowing that fences, unlike garden weeds, do not grow back. By the end of a weekend the gloves have been shredded.

At the end of the day on one of my first trips, I stood alone on a hill where the group had been working and simply looked about. From horizon to horizon, as far as I could see there was nothing but yellow grass blowing in the wind and a single hawk in a blue sky – no plowed fields, no fences, no buildings, and no automobiles. This may have been the way that California looked when European settlers first arrived. These magical places seem timeless and are rare antidotes to the rush of our modern lives.

# Back Roads and Byways of Carrizo Plain National Monument

By Craig Deutsche

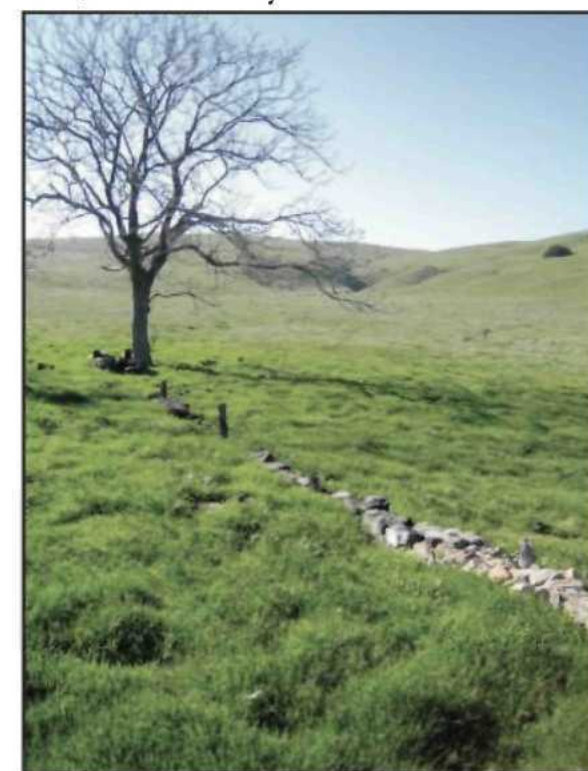
Some places keep their own company. They are best discovered on their own terms, and perhaps they are most rewarding when they come as surprise and even when you are traveling alone. Guide books and signs will bring you to Painted Rock, to the Soda Lake Overlook, to Wallace Creek, and a to a few well known roads within the Carrizo Monument. I will not take you to my favorite places, to the back-country sites that mean so much to me. I will tell you about them and invite you to find them. When you do, then they will become your places also and with their own meanings for you alone.

To the south and west of Soda Lake Road the Caliente Range runs nearly the full length of the Carrizo Plains National Monument. There are no paved roads in these higher places, although a number of dirt roads climb into their foothills. A few even cross the range and descend to the Cuyama Valley. None of these complete the traverse to connect with highway 166, and you will be left to return, probably along the very same road. But beware. These roads are dirt; many are steep; some are badly eroded; a few are rocky. They are not for your sports car or for mine. To travel these routes you will need reasonably high clearance, and in some places you may want four-wheel drive. Above all you will want good judgment. But don't be deterred. It is along these roads and off



Wells Ranch

them that the best of the Carrizo is to be found. Along Soda Lake Road you will see a sign indicating a road to Quail Springs. Once you begin this journey there are no signs to help guide you to the spring or over the range. If you make a wrong turn, springtime will find you hopelessly lost in valleys of flowers that few visitors have ever seen. If you insist on continuing you may reach a dead end with a fence blocking a steep descent. Standing on this hilltop you will look across lower hills, see a few buildings in the middle ground, look down on the main road that you left, and wonder how to reach still another road that crosses in the distance. To the north and east the Temblor Mountains will be colored with flowers in spring but will be dry, dusty, and otherworldly in autumn. With another turn and a few more miles you may, or may not, reach the high point of Caliente Range along the road. When your nerves calm you will see the agricultural fields of the Cuyama Valley below and the Los Padres Forest and coast range of mountains rising beyond the valley. Who would have seen these from the pavement?



Homestead

Beyond the Wells Ranch you may cross over a low ridge toward the head of Middle Canyon. This canyon descends south to the Cuyama Valley, but this canyon is not the route you will take on your first trip. A two-rut road starts down the canyon, disappears, becomes a trail, and then climbs along the side and continues southward along a ridge. Between the ridge and the canyon your discovery will be a wide, grassy flat with an old wooden corral, rusting water troughs, and a long, open view out and over distant farm lands in the valley far below. It is difficult to guess when this field was last used for ranching. You will be absolutely alone. Of course the trail continues, but I will not spoil your trip by telling its tale.

Another of the roads leading south toward the mountains passes a small gravesite on a nearby hill. Rather than drive, please walk up this hill. Inside a low iron fence are three graves. The headstone of one reads, "Mary Morris, 1833 - 1896."

At the age of fifty-five, she, her husband, and four children left Texas for a new life at the south end of the Carrizo. Ten children were already dead in Texas, and she never returned to see the three still living there. During the eight years in the Carrizo, Mary never left the homestead, a dirt floor cabin not far from the gravesite. Several differing accounts of Mary's death have been given, but perhaps it is better that we don't know for certain. On this hilltop above Soda Lake Road and surrounded by the drying grasses, Mary has earned her quiet and our respect.

Farther along this same road you will meet four or five Tree of Heaven and an old, low stone wall. The wall was surely part of a foundation from an earlier time.

These foreign trees, with compound leaves similar to native Ash, are found at many places on the Plain where they were planted for shade near early farms. Beyond this homestead site, and once again on a hillside with a view to the north are the crumbling remains of an old adobe structure. One has to sup-



On the way to Quail Spring

pose that it was used by sheepherders, perhaps from the earliest occupation of the Plain before farming and then cattle were introduced. The history of this adobe site, however, has been lost.

In the open and flat center of the Plain is the Van Meter Ranch site. Here several buildings are still standing, and beside these are three wooden-sided harvesters, probably used in the 1920s. The machines are collapsing and parts are missing, but it is still possible to see how grain was cut, where it was loaded into the thresher itself, and where the blades and fans separated straw and chaff from the grain heads.

This site is to be visited at sunset after the day's heat in the summer. Dryland farmers planted grain in late autumn in anticipation of the winter rains. Harvest was in the summer with temperatures over 100 degrees, with dust everywhere, and with workdays of twelve hours minimum. Standing alone among these ghosts takes you to an earlier time and way of life that is now nearly gone.

I have met ghosts of another kind at one of the rock art sites in the Carrizo. Several years ago I had visited a pictograph site and felt at the time as if it had been painted only a few years earlier. The colors were vivid, the rock seemed solid, and there were no footprints to lead anyone to the place. It was a wonderful discovery, and I was secretly, and perhaps foolishly, proud to have found it. Reading which I have done since suggests that the Plains were probably used seasonally by Chumash peoples from as long ago as 10,000 years. Archeologists suggest that

the paintings were made by shamans in the tribe as a part of their journeys *Adobe* to and from the other world. These academics also acknowledge that all their explanations are speculative, and truly we can only wonder at meanings. Photos of these paintings are nearly useless in conveying the impression that they give. The setting with long views, dry heat, juniper bushes, and perhaps nearby mortar holes are a single piece with the painting.



Harvester

Several months ago I returned to this particular site. It was early morning, and I was planning to leave the Plain in a few hours for my home in Los Angeles. I was looking, of course, for the same place I had once discovered. I did, and did not succeed. Somehow the rock was more weathered than I had remembered. The colors of the images were fading, and there were human footprints not far away. If these peoples are still watching us, I have to wonder what they think. I will not return to this site again. This is a personal story, and I invite you to explore and find your own personal story. If you take a wrong turn along one of the dirt roads, then you will find places that I have not seen. Then I will have to come looking to find your discoveries.

There is another byway that I have found out in the open center plain. For a number of years volunteer groups have been removing and modifying barbed wire fencing in the Carrizo. Pronghorn do not jump fences, but rather they attempt to go under. Where fences are intact and lower wires are close to the ground these may inhibit movement of the antelope, particularly when they are stressed by predators or by automobile traffic on the roads.

Several months ago with time on my hands I went to a particular section of barbed wire where I had worked with a group. This was a particularly remote, and perhaps lonely, piece of fence north and east, beyond Soda Lake. My car stayed behind as I worked first with bolt cutters to release the wire from the poles and then rolled the fallen wire to be picked up later. Where metal poles had corroded in the saline soil I pushed them over for removal. Other poles were solid and had to stay. It was warm in early May, and I had to work slowly.

Dust devils rose to the west of me in Soda Lake. Meadowlarks were singing all around. Beside one fence pole I found a piece of coyote skull. In the track of the nearby road there lay the outer covering of an antelope horn. Sun was bright for a while, but in the later afternoon clouds raced overhead, and a few raindrops scattered briefly. The meadowlarks continued singing as the shadows lengthened. A few poles stood in a long line across the open country, and wire coils lay along the nearby road. These byways are not only found on the land. As you travel them, they become a part of you as well.

Craig Deutsche is a Volunteer for The Friends of the Carrizo Plain and Sierra Club, former Publisher and Managing Editor of the "Desert Report", and actively involved in creating Pronghorn-friendly fences and documenting oral histories of long-time families on the Carrizo Plain. His recent book, *Another Place and Time: Voices from the Carrisa Plains*, 2013, is a time capsule of memories shared by different generations of ranchers, sheepherders, farmers and the tight-knit community that connected them as they lived and worked hard to support themselves on the Carrisa Plains.

\* This article first appeared in "Carrizo Connection", published by the Friends of the Carrizo Plain.



Van Meter Ranch

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# Wildlife of the Carrizo Plain



Clockwise from top left: Coyote, American Badger, Pronghorn (center), Mountain Bluebird, Mountain Plover

Photos courtesy of Roger Gambs



## Stop 1 (continued from page 9)

At this point in the tour, there is also the option of walking closer to the water on a few trails and a boardwalk. We chose to forego this option since we had unwisely chosen to visit the Carrizo Plain during the hottest part of the day. It was a bad choice on my part, because if we had gone closer to the water...

### I COULD HAVE WALKED ON WATER.

Well, kind of and just maybe. But more specifically, I could have walked on the lake's salt crust.

According to Hurl: "During the winter, Soda Lake may have enough water to be a shallow lake. The depth of the water varies depending on the amount of rainfall, but averages between one and three feet. In one really wet year, the water level reached all the way up to Soda Lake Road at the base of the Overlook Hill. *In the dry months, water lies just below the salt crust. Be careful if you walk out there, because you may break through the crust and sink into the mud.* We prefer that you stay on the Boardwalk."

Oh, well, I guess there's always next time.  
 Note: Close to the vista site are two recently installed bathrooms. As there are few bathrooms available, it'd be smart to use them now.



Although closed during the summer, the Visitor's Center does provide tourists with an informative brochure and a detailed map of the area.

## Stop 2: The Goodwin Education Center

From the Soda Lake Overlook, the Visitor's Center is just a seven-mile drive down Soda Lake Road, the main thoroughfare in the Carrizo Plain National Monument. Unfortunately for us, the center was closed when we went (and will remain closed until December). Luckily, though, an informative brochure and a detailed map are available just outside the center's doors, so we made good use of those materials instead.

The small building does, however, feature an easily accessible outdoor native plant garden and a helpful brochure to aid in the identification process. This outdoor area also serves as an observation point from which to view remnants of the Plain's farming past, including a grain elevator. I didn't understand the complete significance of this history at the time, as it is a complicated one, but it sure looked cool, and we got some good photos, too.

In an effort to protect nesting birds such as prairie falcons, ravens, gold eagles, and barn owls and to continue the preservation of the rock itself, Painted Rock is closed from March 1 through July 15. So for us, all we could do was read about its history and look at Painted Rock from a distance, which, I must admit, is not too interesting.

## Stop 3: Wallace Creek

I'm embarrassed to admit this, but we accidentally bypassed Wallace Creek. I know what you're thinking: "This girl wanted to go on the self-guided tour to write a piece for this Carrizo Plain Visitors' Guide, and she couldn't make it to one-third of the sites?!"

Yep, that's correct. But in my defense, we didn't avoid the creek because we didn't want to see it or its accompanying trail, but rather I didn't realize where it was in relation to Stop 2. We wanted to continue on state Highway 166 on our way out of the monument, and Wallace Creek was just a bit out our way that day.

(Side note: The paved portion of Soda Lake Road ends shortly after the turnoff for the Visitor's Center. Driving for more than an hour on the unpaved portion of this road is not enjoyable. Seven Mile Road, accessible from state Highway 58, though also unpaved, proved to be a better entrance into the national monument for us; it's also a shorter drive. Also, signs along the side of Soda Lake Road and elsewhere warned us that roads were impassible when wet, so be careful!)

Wallace Creek, for those who *do* make it out there, is perhaps the best place in the monument to view just how dramatically the San Andres Fault — the 625-mile fault line that runs nearly the entire length of California, from just below Los Angeles to the Bay Area — has affected the Carrizo Plain. Evidence of its work can be seen in the offset of the creek bed and fault scarps, which according to Hurl in the self-guided tour, are particularly well preserved in the Carrizo Plain.

Hurl also explained that the 8.0-magnitude Fort Tejon earthquake of 1857 "may have centered in the Carrizo and is probably the strongest earthquake to hit California in historic time. Surface ruptures extended 200 miles and offsets of 10 meters occurred within the Carrizo. Future seismic activity within the Carrizo is highly likely."

The creek is currently offset by about 130 meters, 10 meters of which were caused by the 1857 Fort Tejon earthquake.

Because of these unique features, the Carrizo Plain provides academics with plenty of research opportunities. Evidence of the fault's activity can be easily seen elsewhere in the monument, too.

Those who wish to take the self-guided Carrizo Plain National Monument tour themselves can find the four podcasts (an introduction and one for each of the stops) at:  
[www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/bakersfield/Programs/carrizo/self-guided-tour.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/bakersfield/Programs/carrizo/self-guided-tour.html)

Continued on Page 24

Seeing firsthand the beauty of the Carrizo Plain National Monument, it's obvious that there *is* more to it than what meets the eye. (It's not just brown and hot, I promise.)

My favorite example of this — the highlight of our trip — was the spotting of a male pronghorn antelope. We saw him toward the end of our visit, as we traveled on Soda Lake Road out of the national monument and toward state Highway 166. I must say, seeing a lone pronghorn antelope run as fast as he could from the side of the road when he first saw our car round the corner, then stopping at a safe distance to observe us — just like we did with him, camera at the ready — was spectacular. We were two species alone in this barren, hot environment, both trying to understand the significance of this encounter, and we understood him perfectly.



*Right, a pronghorn antelope, one of only 100 on the Plain, has a close encounter with the author. Below, a view of the Carrizo Plain from Soda Lake Road and the entrance to the KCL camping site.*

## The Peoples Who Once Lived On The Carrizo

by Jane M McCabe

Those who know Spanish know that “carrizo” means reed, telling us that the Carrizo Plain was so named because it was once filled with reeds. Central California between the coast and the San Joaquin Valley is uninhabitable in some areas, a land of mountains and deserts. The Carrizo Plain (please see map on page 13) is a swath of high desert plain that runs from Highway 166 in the south to 58 in the north, a distance of about 45 miles. Its width is about 15 miles. To visit it you can enter from 166 about 10 miles west of Maricopa or from 58 about 20 miles west of Highway 33. The road runs through it from the south to the north, northwest. Along the road to the east is Soda Lake, a pencil shaped alkaline lake with a crust of white salt surrounding it. In the middle of the plain to its west is Painted Rock, a horseshoe-shaped rock made of marine sandstone about 250 feet across and 45 feet tall.

Few people live on the Carrizo Plain today, but it was once home to various tribes of indigenous peoples, who attributed religious significance to the rock and painted on its surface. (One can probably assume these people also used the reeds of the plain to weave baskets, though none of these remain today.)

The interior of the rock alcove is adorned with many pictographs created by the Chumash, Salinan and Yokut peoples over many thousands of years. Ancient rock art in red, black and white yucca pigments, and some yellow, green and blue were painted with rodent tail hair brushes or simple finger painting.

### The Chumash People

Estimates are that the Chumash people first populated the Carrizo Plain about 2000 BCE (when Abraham migrated from Haran to Canaan) but mostly abandoned it, possibly due to drought, about CE 600 (after Rome was overrun by barbarians.)

Pictographs and petroglyphs are common through interior California, the rock painting tradition thrived until the 19th century. Chumash rock art is considered to be some of the most elaborate rock art tradition in the region.

The Chumash lived in the present-day counties of Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis in southern California until the early 19th Century. They were a Hokan-speaking, maritime, hunter-gatherer society whose livelihood was based on the sea. They developed excellent skills for catch-

ing fish, shellfish, and other marine mammals. Beyond fishing, however, they were also skilled in creating rock art. Rock art may have been created by shamans during vision quests. No one is absolutely certain about the meaning of the Chumash Rock art, but scholars generally agree that it is connected with religion and astronomy.

Chumash rock art is almost invariably found in caves or on cliffs in the mountains. It makes sense that the rock art sites are always found near streams, springs, or other sources of permanent water as the artists would need water to mix their pigments.

Chumash traditional narratives in oral history says that religious specialists, known as *alchuklash* created the rock art. Non-Chumash people call these practitioners medicine men or shamans. The sites for the vision quests were usually located near the shaman's village. The Chumash considered caves, rocks, and water sources quite powerful, and the shamans saw them as “portals to the sacred realm...where they could enter the supernatural.”

### Subject matter and materials

Chumash rock art depicts images like humans, animals, celestial bodies, and other shapes and patterns. These depictions vary considerably and appear to be in no particular order or arrangement. The colors of the paintings vary as well, from red or black monochromes to elaborate polychromes. The Chumash made paint from mixing soil, mortar, and a liquid binder like blood or oil from animals or mashed seeds, which helped to make the paint permanent and waterproof. Orange and red paint contained hematite or iron oxide, while yellow came from limonite, blue and green from copper or serpentine, white from kaolin clays or gypsum, and black from manganese or charcoal.

Paint was applied with a person's finger or a brush. Images depicted in the paintings are representational and abstract. Abstract images include squares, circles and triangles, zigzags, crisscrosses, parallel lines, and pinwheels. Interpretations

In the early 20th Century, non-Natives began studying California rock art, including a number of archaeologists, such as Julian Steward and Alfred Kroeber. Because of some commonly occurring symbols in paintings, it is believed that portions of the rock art depict themes of fertility, water, and rain.

A radiocarbon test on pigment from a Santa Barbara area pictograph site showed that the sample was about 2,000 years old (which would mean it was created about the time of Jesus.)

## Other Area Attractions

### West Kern Oil Museum

This museum set in the oil-rich hills of Taft tells the story of the oil companies, of everyday life in the early oilfields and in the oil camps, and the story of oil itself. To schedule a tour, call (661) 765-6664.

Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. (Sundays)

From the Plain: Take Highway 166 East to Maricopa. At the stop sign in Maricopa, turn left onto Highway 33. Proceed approximately 7 miles to Wood Street, the first paved left turn coming into Taft. Turn left onto Wood Street, and look for the Oil Museum parking sign. [www.westkern-oilmuseum.org](http://www.westkern-oilmuseum.org). [wkom491@gmail.com](mailto:wkom491@gmail.com).

### Painted Rock

The sandstone formation at Painted Rock has long drawn the attention of Carrizo Plain visitors. About 3,000 – 4,000 years ago, Native Americans began to paint their sacred images within the alcove of the rock. Not surprisingly, the power of this place continues to enthrall, and it still receives many visitors today.

Unfortunately, the attraction and accessibility of the site have also drawn the attention of peoples who didn't appreciate the significance of the pictographs, or rock paintings, created by earlier Native Americans. The site sustained significant damage due to vandalism over the last century as a result. Measures have been taken to repair some of the damage but what has been lost can never be reclaimed. Management of the site is focused upon protection, preservation, public education and research, while respecting the Native American values of this sacred site.

You stewardship is vital to the protection and preservation of this important site.

### Visiting Painted Rock

Painted Rock may be visited as part of a BLM guided tour or with a self-guided tour permit. Tours or permits are available according to the calendar below.

-March 1 to July 15: Painted Rock is closed, except for BLM guided tours conducted on Saturdays from mid-March to the end of May. No other form of public visitation is allowed during this time period.

-July 16 to the end of February: Self-guided tour permits are available and required for unguided public access to Painted Rock.

BLM Guided Tour and Self-Guided Tour Permit Reservations  
BLM guided tour reservations and self-guided tour permits can be booked either online or by phone at the numbers listed below through [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). Permits and tours booked either by phone or online will be charged a nominal processing fee for each reservation. When booking online at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov), do a search for Carrizo Plain National Monument, then click on “Check Availability”, then click on “Enter Date” for the appropriate tour. For the BLM guided tour select “Soda Lake/Painted Rock Tour”; for the self-guided tour select, “Painted Rock Self-Guided Tour”. Then follow instructions to complete the booking process.

When you received your confirmation e-mail from [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) you will receive a set of rules to follow while visiting Painted Rock and if going on the Self-Guided tour you will also receive a gate code to enter the area. Please follow the rules.

Recreation.gov Phone Numbers

Carrizo Plain National Monument, Painted Rock, Soda Lake/Painted Rock tour and Painted Rock Self-Guided Tour reservation (toll free): 1-877-444-6777. International reservations: 518-885-3639. TDD: 1-877-833-6777. Customer Service: 1-888-448-1474.

### Buena Vista Aquatic Recreational Area

A man-made site comprised of two lakes — Lake Evans and the much larger Lake Webb — the recreation area offers tourists fishing, boating, jet sky, camping, picnicing, and bicycling opportunities. For reservations, call (661) 868-7050.

Hours: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

From the Plain: Take Highway 166 to Highway 33. Turn right on Enos Lane (near the Texaco and Shell stations), which will take you to the Main Gate Entrance.

### Kern National Wildlife Refuge

Located in the historic Tulare Lake Basin, the refuge was the first effort to preserve wetland habitat in the area. The west side of the refuge contains upland habitat for endangered wildlife endemic to the San Joaquin Valley. For more information, call (661) 725-2767.

Hours: 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset

Waterfowl Hunting Season: October through January; tour route closed on Wednesdays and Saturdays during the hunting season

From the Plain: Take Highway 166 East to Interstate 5. Go north on I-5, then take Highway 46 East 5 miles to Corcoran Road and turn north. Drive 10.6 miles to the refuge, located at the intersection of Corcoran Road and Garces Highway.

### Tule Elk State Natural Reserve

Created in 1932, the reserve seeks to protect a once-endangered herd of tule elk, giving the elk room to roam and visitors a chance to view them.

Hours: 8 a.m. to sunset

From the Plain: Take Highway 166 east. Turn left onto Highway 33. The turnoff to the reserve is located about ten miles north of Taft.

### The Petroleum Highway

The portion of this route N of Route 166 has historically been called El Camino Viejo.

In the portions of the route in Kern and Fresno counties, SR 33 passes through one of the United States' largest petroleum extraction fields, with hundreds of nodding oil pumps along the highway. Some of the fields visible from the highway include the Midway-Sunset, South Belridge, Cymric, Lost Hills, and Coalinga oil fields.

Most of SR 33's route is through sparsely populated, relatively desolate portions of the San Joaquin Valley. Travelers along it should use caution, since emergency services are typically dozens of miles away. Carrying extra water and coolant is especially advised, since summertime temperatures in the area routinely surpass 100 °F (39 °C).

### Taft Oilworker's Monument

Taft is the site of the largest bronze statue in California, the 40-foot Oilworker Monument that honors the hard-working men who built Kern County's vast oil industry. The massive structure, found at the intersection of Supply Row and Sixth Street adjacent to a public greenbelt, is highlighted by three eight-foot bronze workers rendered in exquisite detail. Topped by a bronze derrick treated to look like wood, the Monument not only looks realistic, but is historically accurate - right down to nuts and bolts made to same size as those used to build derricks more than a century ago. With expressive features, exquisite detail, dynamic gesture, and through-provoking content, this latest work is sure to take its place among the great masterpieces of art history.



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# Visitor Services Around the Carrizo

The Cuyama Valley, McKittrick and Derby Acres



**Santa Barbara Pistachio Company**  
3380 Highway 33  
Ventucopa

Services: Gas, food, and information  
Store Hours:  
Monday through Sunday from 8am to 6pm  
Farm Store Phone: (661) 766-2177  
Santa Barbara Pistachio Company and Store is located on Highway 33 in Ventucopa. The family-operated farm is known as the "original home of the flavored pistachio." The area's perfect high-desert climate of sunny days and cool, clear nights is almost identical to the pistachio's native climate in the Middle East.

Still a small family enterprise in these modern times of corporate, high-tech agribusiness, Santa Barbara Pistachio is owned and operated by Gene and Gail Zannon, with their sons, Tristan and Josh, in charge of production and farming the 380 acres of pistachio trees. At Santa Barbara Pistachio Company, quality does grow on trees.

## McKittrick

The community of McKittrick is located near the crossroads of Highway's 33 and 58 in western Kern County. The Penny Bar and Cafe, located in the old McKittrick Hotel, is know for its famous penny bar, containing over 1 million pennies that cover the floors, walls, and bar. The restaurant is open 7 days a week, and features breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The hotel, however, has not rented rooms for over 40 years.

## Derby Acres

Derby Acres is a small town located about 10 minutes north of Taft on Highway 33. The Tumbleweed Cafe and Bar, located in the heart of Oil Country is a favorite place to eat and drink on the westside of Kern County. The restaurant features breakfast and lunch, and dinner on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Stop by and say hello to owner, inventor and world traveler Orchel Krier. The site also offer RV facilities.



**Sagebrush Annie's**  
4211 Highway 33  
Ventucopa

Services: Wine tasting, dinner, and special events  
Wine Tasting Room: Open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from noon to 5:30pm  
Dinner: Served Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. For reservations, call (661) 766-2319

Sagebrush Annie's is located about one hour north of Ojai on Highway 33 and about one hour southwest of Bakersfield via state Highway 119 to Highway 166 in Maricopa and then to Highway 33 south in Cuyama Valley. From the Los Angeles area, we are a two-hour drive via Interstate 5 north to Frazier Park and then west through the Lockwood Valley. A less-traveled scenic route from the Los Angeles area is west from Frazier Park through Pine Mountain Club and along Cerro Noroeste Road to highway 166, then southwest to Highway 33 south.



**The Place**  
4014 Highway 33  
Ventucopa

Services: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner; catering; and special events  
Hours:  
Open Monday through Friday from 9am - 9pm  
Open Saturday and Sunday from 8am - 9pm  
Phone: (661) 766-2660.

The Place restaurant is located in Ventucopa and offers homemade breakfast, lunch, and dinner. They also have great pizza. On Saturday and Sunday, they offer rib eye steak dinners.

Stop by and say hello to owners Vicky and Alick.

## Paik's Ranch House Restaurant

*"Where Everybody Meets"*

Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner  
**Open 7 Days**

Mon, Tues, Thurs, Sat. 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Sun, Wed, Fri. 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

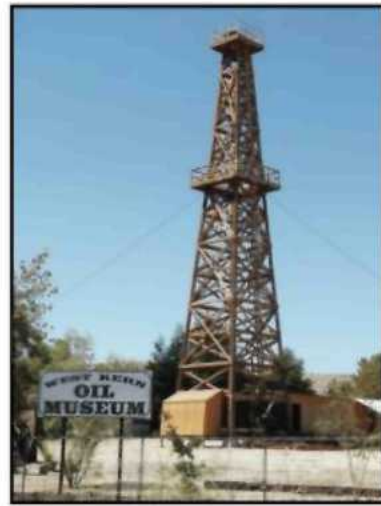
**765-6915**

200 Kern Street, Taft, CA

**For Advertising Information,  
Please call  
(661) 765-6550**

# Visitor Services Around the Carrizo Plain

Taft and Maricopa



## The City of Taft

The City of Taft is located approximately 24 miles east of the Carrizo on Highway 119 and Highway 33.

With a population of over 7,500, Taft is a full-service city offering more than 25 restaurants, 3 hotels, 2 supermarkets, 2 pharmacies, more than a dozen service stations, and other essential traveler services.

Taft has been officially designated the "Gateway to the Carrizo Plain", with a Carrizo Plain Visitors Center located at the Taft Chamber of Commerce, 400 Kern St. The Chamber's phone number is (661) 765-2166.

Taft is known for friendly people who are always ready to answer questions, and ready to recommend a good restaurant or give directions.



## Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge

The Bitter Creek National Wildlife Refuge is located in the southwestern San Joaquin Valley foothills of Kern County, California. Elevations on the Refuge range from 1,600 to 4,680 feet. Purchased to protect dwindling California condor foraging and roosting habitat in 1985, the 14,097-acre refuge is the site where the last wild female condor was trapped in 1986.

The refuge is managed to preserve historic endangered California condor foraging and roosting areas. The refuge has an active grazing program, using cattle to manage wildlife habitat.

The refuge is administered by Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The refuge complex main office is located off-refuge at 2493 Portola Road, Suite A, in Ventura, California.

The refuge is closed to public use.



## Maricopa

The City of Maricopa, with a population of 1,250 is located 19 miles east of the southern entrance to the Carrizo Plain at the intersection of Highways 33, 166, and 119.

The city features one Shell service station, a Motel 8, and three restaurants.

The city also features an old-fashioned quilt shop, the Maricopa Quilt Company, featuring hand-made quilts and supplies.

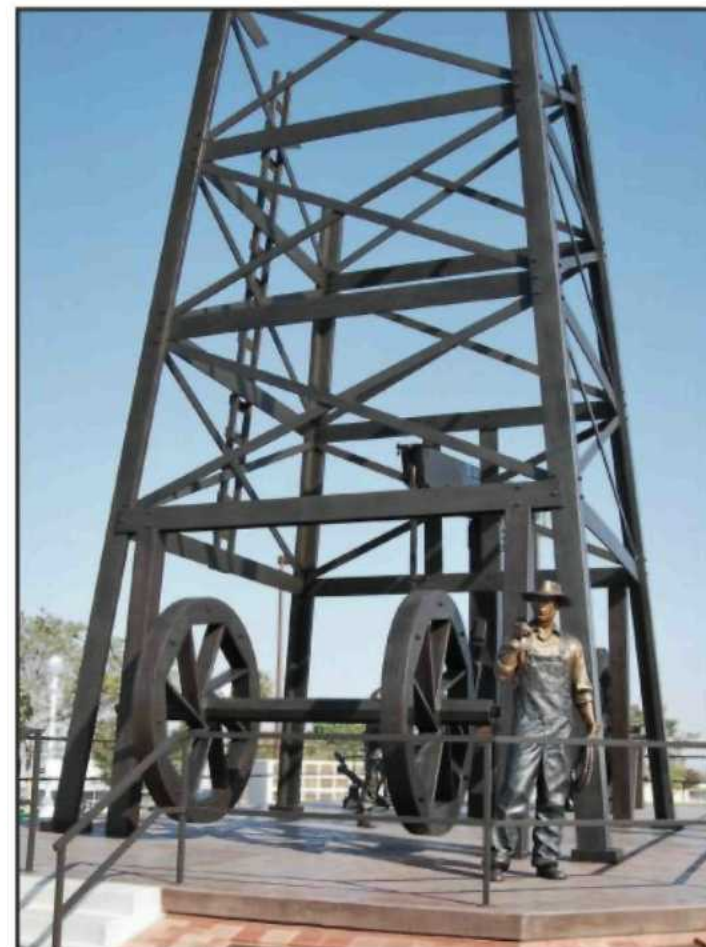
## Taft Oilworkers Monument

Taft is the site of the largest bronze statue in California, the 40-foot Oilworker Monument that honors the hard-working men who built Kern County's vast oil industry. The massive structure, found at the intersection of Supply Row and Sixth Street adjacent to a public greenbelt, is highlighted by three eight-foot bronze workers rendered in exquisite detail. Two other life sized figures, a woman and child are also featured adjacent to the monument.

Topped by a bronze derrick treated to look like wood, the Monument not only looks realistic, but is historically accurate - right down to nuts and bolts made to same size as those used to build derricks more than a century ago.

Sculptor Benjamin Victor, a Taft native, achieved national prominence at age 26 when he became the youngest artist to ever have a sculpture displayed in the National Statuary Hall of the United States Capitol. With expressive features, exquisite detail, dynamic gesture, and through-provoking content, this latest work is sure to take its place among the great masterpieces of art history.

In October 2011, there was an unveiling ceremony of two additional sculptures to the Taft Oilworkers Monument. The newest additions are a woman and child completing the monument. Surrounding by bricks and plaques honoring oilworkers, oil companies, and their families, this monument is a must see when visiting Kern County.



The Taft Oilworkers Monument, a 40 ft. tall bronze sculpture honoring local oilworkers.

# Visitor Services Around the Carrizo Plain - Santa Margarita

Santa Margarita is an unincorporated town located in San Luis Obispo County, California founded in 1897 near Cuesta Peak and San Luis Obispo along State Route 58. It's one of the most rural areas in San Luis Obispo County. The town's name comes from the name issued by the Mexican government to describe the area when it was a land grant inside Alta California. It is home to a Mexican mission named Santa Margarita Asistencia. Santa Margarita Lake, a major water source for San Luis Obispo, is located several miles southeast of the town on the Salinas River. It is served by the zip code 93453 and area code 805.

The town is surrounded by the Santa Margarita Ranch, a 15,000+ acre Spanish rancho which is home to the historic Santa Margarita de Cortona Mission Asistencia. Secularized from Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, these lands in the

foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountains were originally granted to Joaquin Estrada, who later sold it to the Martin Murphy, Jr. family. California culture is still very much alive at the Rancho, which remains in the private ownership of local developers Rob Rossi, Doug Filliponi, Karl Wittstrom, and Ron Hertel. It remains a working stock ranch and is also now home to the Ancient Peaks Winery and the Pacific Coast Railroad Company, a narrow gauge steam heritage railway.

Santa Margarita was founded in 1897, not to be confused with Rancho Santa Margarita, California that was founded in the 1990's. The population of Santa Margarita is small, but has finally surpassed the number of the towns elevation which stands at 1,100 feet.

Santa Margarita is just north of San Luis Obispo. The climate is similar to Napa Valley, with rainfall at about 20 inches, and

frost appearing from November through March.

The town is home to a few restaurants, a gas station, a liquor store, a feed store, and a lumber store. The town also has several other conveniences, but no stop lights!

Santa Margarita is located just northeast of San Luis Obispo between San Luis Obispo and Atascadero along US Highway 101 near Santa Margarita Lake.

Santa Margarita is part of the San Luis Obispo-Atascadero-Paso Robles metro



visit [SantaMargarita.com](http://SantaMargarita.com)

Gateway to North San Luis Obispo County & the Carrizo Plain National Monument

HOME OF THE SANTA MARGARITA WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL

Come explore our 'hidden treasures'!

## The Peoples: Continued from Page 24

In recent times there have been many marks left by early settlers such as one reading "Geo. Lewis 1908", founder of Atascadero, California. Unfortunately there has also been major defacing of this site. In the 1920s the large pictographs was irreparably damaged from a shotgun blast. To protect these treasures from further vandalism the public is restricted from close access to the pictographs.

"Painted Rock is widely considered to be among the finest examples of Native American pictograph painting in the world. Although the original painted panels have been damaged, largely due to turn of the century souvenir collectors who purposely removed sections of paint, a significant amount of the paintings are intact. Painted Rock continues to hold important spiritual values for contemporary Native American people who often visit the site for ceremonies and religious observances," said Tamara Whitley, archaeologist in the BLM Bakersfield Field Office.

The BLM manages Painted Rock for public visitation and education while balancing Native American values and concerns. The permit application process allows the BLM to educate the public about appropriate visitation of the site monitoring impacts through the visitor tracking system.

Permits will be available online at recreation.gov. Permits booked through recreation.gov will be charged a \$1.50 processing fee for each permit.

From March 1 to July 15, Painted Rock will be open for guided tours only. Reservations for guided tours, which also visit the Soda Lake Overlook and wildflower viewing sites, can also be made online at recreation.gov. Larger group tours must be booked through the Goodwin Education Center by calling (805) 475-2131. The Goodwin Education Center is open December through May, Thursdays through Sundays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

# Fabulous Back Roads of California



## California Highway 166



State Route 166 connects the Central Coast of California to the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Route 166 starts off in Guadalupe in northwestern Santa Barbara County and heads east towards the largest city on its eastern journey: Santa Maria. It then joins with U.S. Route 101 for the last few miles in Santa Barbara County before crossing the Santa Maria River and splitting off in San Luis Obispo County. For the next 75 miles (121 km), SR 166 crosses the Santa Barbara/San Luis Obispo county line a total of five times. This stretch follows the Cuyama River through a canyon separating the Sierra Madre Mountains from mountains in San Luis Obispo County, and then opens out into the Cuyama Valley, passing cattle ranches, going through the Russell Ranch Oil Field, and passing Aliso Canyon Road, the turnoff to the South Cuyama Oil Field. On the north during this stretch is the mile-high Caliente Range, which contains Caliente Mountain, the highest peak in San Luis Obispo County.

After going through the towns of New Cuyama and Cuyama, the highway meets SR 33 north of Ventucopa. Approximately eight miles east of this intersection lies Soda Lake Road on the left (at the closed Reyes 76 Service Station). SR 33 and SR 166 merge until reaching Maricopa, where SR 166 heads due east for its last 20 miles (32 km), intersecting with I-5 nine miles (14 km) north of the Grapevine. SR 166 ends at SR 99 in Mettler, and it is the last exit for both I-5 and SR 99 southbound before they merge near Wheeler Ridge.

From US 101 to the junction of SR 33, 166 is signed as the "CHP Officers Irvine and Stovall Memorial Highway." In February 1998, a large storm swelled the Cuyama River and caused it to wash out a section of the highway. Officers Britt Irvine and Rick Stovall were responding to an early morning call about a truck accident when their CHP cruiser drove off the washed out section, overturned, and was buried in mud.



## California Highway 33



Beginning in Ventura as a short freeway (the "Ojai Freeway"), it continues north as an undivided surface road through Ojai, follows Matilija Canyon past the easternmost extremity of the Santa Ynez Mountains, passes over the Transverse Ranges at Pine Mountain Summit, coming down into the Cuyama Valley to an eventual junction with SR 166. After joining with 166 for about 20 miles (32 km) it turns northwest, following the western side of the San Joaquin Valley. Between Taft and Avenal it roughly parallels Interstate 5; for the first 15 miles (24 km) of this portion it follows the axis of the Midway-Sunset Oil Field. Northwest of Avenal, it turns due west to enter Coalinga, then turns northeast and soon becomes concurrent with I-5 for 13 miles (21 km). Thereafter, it departs due north near Cantua Creek, turns northwest at Mendota, and meets State Route 152 in Dos Palos, with which it runs concurrently for approximately ten miles. It departs again to the northwest near Los Banos, turns north at Santa Nella (where it has an interchange with I-5), and roughly parallels I-5 and the San Joaquin River until its final terminus at I-5 at Yarmouth.

The portion of Route 33 in Kern County between Route 46 and Route 166 is named the Petroleum Highway. It was named in recognition of the petroleum industry, which has made an important economic contribution to Kern County and other parts of the state. The heart of oil country in Kern County is in the western part of the county adjacent to Route 33, where oil has been produced for more than 100 years. In fact, this region of Kern County produces 50 percent of California's oil production; and the largest gas field in the west, Elk Hills, is within sight of Route 33. Travelers on Route 33 can visit the only oil boomtowns in California and the West Kern Oil Museum in Taft. Named by Assembly Concurrent Resolution 185, July 16, 2004, Chapter 128.



## California Highway 58



State Route 58 is an east-west highway across the southern San Joaquin Valley, the Tehachapi Mountains, which border the southern Sierra Nevada, and the Mojave Desert. It runs between its western terminus near Santa Margarita (junction U.S. Route 101) and its eastern terminus at Barstow (junction Interstate 15). It has junctions with Interstate 5 near Buttonwillow, State Route 99 in Bakersfield, State Route 202 in Tehachapi, State Route 14 in Mojave, and U.S. Route 395 at Kramer Junction. Route 58 gives good access to Edwards Air Force Base.

Route 58 is a freeway from its south junction with Route 99 in Bakersfield to several miles east of Mojave (a freeway bypass of Mojave was completed in 2004), except for two grade-level intersections two miles (3 km) apart in the Caliente area. There is another grade-level intersection east of Mojave and west of the main Edwards AFB north gate exit where California City Boulevard intersects it. Other freeway segments are bypasses of Boron and Barstow.

Route 58 is the only freeway to cross the Sierra Nevada range south of I-80, the only other freeway to cross the Sierra. The route also offers an alternative to the often treacherous Donner Pass to truckers traveling from the San Francisco Bay Area to points eastward; prior to the construction of Interstate 80, the road (as U.S. Route 466) was heavily used for this purpose.

Route 58 west of Buttonwillow is a winding mountain road through a thinly populated area. Alternatives such as State Route 46 to the north or State Route 166 to the south are recommended for those not wishing to traverse so mountainous a route; much of this section of Route 58 is prohibited to truck traffic. However, this section of SR 58 provides close access to the Carrizo Plain National Monument, which is known for its scenic beauty and geological features, including the San Andreas Fault.

# Greetings from the Friends of the Carrizo Plain

Greetings from the Friends of the Carrizo Plain

My name is Ray Hatch, and I am the Current President of the Friends of the Carrizo Plain. It has been over 13 years since the Carrizo Plain National Monument was formed. In fact it was February 17, 2001 when President Bill Clinton signed the Executive Order to form the Carrizo Plain National Monument. But the work to protect this fragile landscape started well before 2001. Local landowners, residents, and concerned citizens worked alongside public agencies and the Nature Conservancy to establish what would become the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

The Friends of the Carrizo Plain's role in this story began when nine board members, primarily interested residents from the surrounding communities formed the Friends of the Carrizo Plain. Shortly after the Monument was formed, they established the Friends of the Carrizo Plain and on March 1, 2002 Articles of Incorporation were filed with the State of California and Friends of the Carrizo Plain was established. In July 2003 our 501(c)(3) federal non-profit status was granted by the IRS.

The mission of the Friends of the Carrizo Plain "is to support the managing partners in the Education, Interpretation, and Conservation of the unique resources of the Carrizo Plain National Monument." We seek to accomplish our mission by educating the public about the Monument's special qualities, increasing public understand of the value of protecting the Monument's resources, and recruiting their support in protecting this unique part of the National Landscape Conservation system. The role of educating the public is one of our major objectives.

Our primary way of accomplishing this objective is the operation of the gift shop and the book store at the Goodwin Education Center on the Monument. Here we encounter the largest number of people seeking to understand better this last remaining jewel of California's vast grasslands. Our ability to provide resources and material that help explain the value of protecting the Carrizo Plain, is an important tool in increasing the public's support in preserving this area in its natural state.

We also educate the public by outreach at community events, developing print and electronic educational material for display in the Education Center, by providing participant luncheons and educational materials at volunteer activities such as National Public Lands Day, and information tables at various civic events (Morro Bay Bird Festival and San Luis Obispo Earth Day Celebration).

For the last two years we urged and financially helped school and other groups visit the Monument and over 300 participated each year in field trips as a direct result of this effort. This last year for the first time we were able to fund an intern to work with BLM staff to support the Goodwin Education Center activities and to help with tours. We were able to do this because of your financial support of our organization.

We are becoming entering the high tech arena in the Goodwin Education center and we have provided two iPads for use there. One is an information kiosk and the other is used for our sales register. We will be adding more technology in the near future.

We have several other projects underway and will report on those as they get closer to completion of the project. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of those individuals and organizations, past and present, for helping to protect this precious landscape and I would urge all of you reading this to visit Carrizo Plain National Monument. The opportunity to enjoy, to learn, to share, to preserve, and to protect Carrizo Plain National Monument's wildlife, geology, plants, and other unique features are waiting there for all of us to discover.



## JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE CARRIZO PLAIN

*"Protecting the Unique Beauty of the Carrizo"*

[www.carrizo.org](http://www.carrizo.org)

The Friends of the Carrizo Plain (FOCP) is composed of volunteers devoting time, energy, and resources to support the managing partners (Bureau of Land Management, The Nature Conservancy, and California Department of Fish and Game) in the education, interpretation, and conservation of the unique resources of the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

*A Carrizo Plain National Monument that remains unique and preserved, providing an internationally recognized model of cooperative resource conservation.*

### Values:

- Being good stewards of the land
- Fostering trust between the FOCP, the managing partners, and the public
- Promoting and generating enthusiasm for understanding the resources of the Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Cooperating and building consensus to achieve goals
- Respecting the serenity of the Carrizo Plain National Monument
- Leaving a legacy of the Carrizo Plain National Monument for future generations to appreciate

### Why join FOCP?

Your membership will help support activities of The Friends of the Carrizo Plain that are consistent with its mission, vision, and values.

FRIENDS of the



CARRIZO PLAIN

[www.Carrizo.org](http://www.Carrizo.org)

**PLEASE JOIN US:** Fill out and return the form below with your check to:

Friends of the Carrizo Plain  
HCR 69 - Box 3078  
Santa Margarita, CA 93453

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