



Backcountry Driving Companion



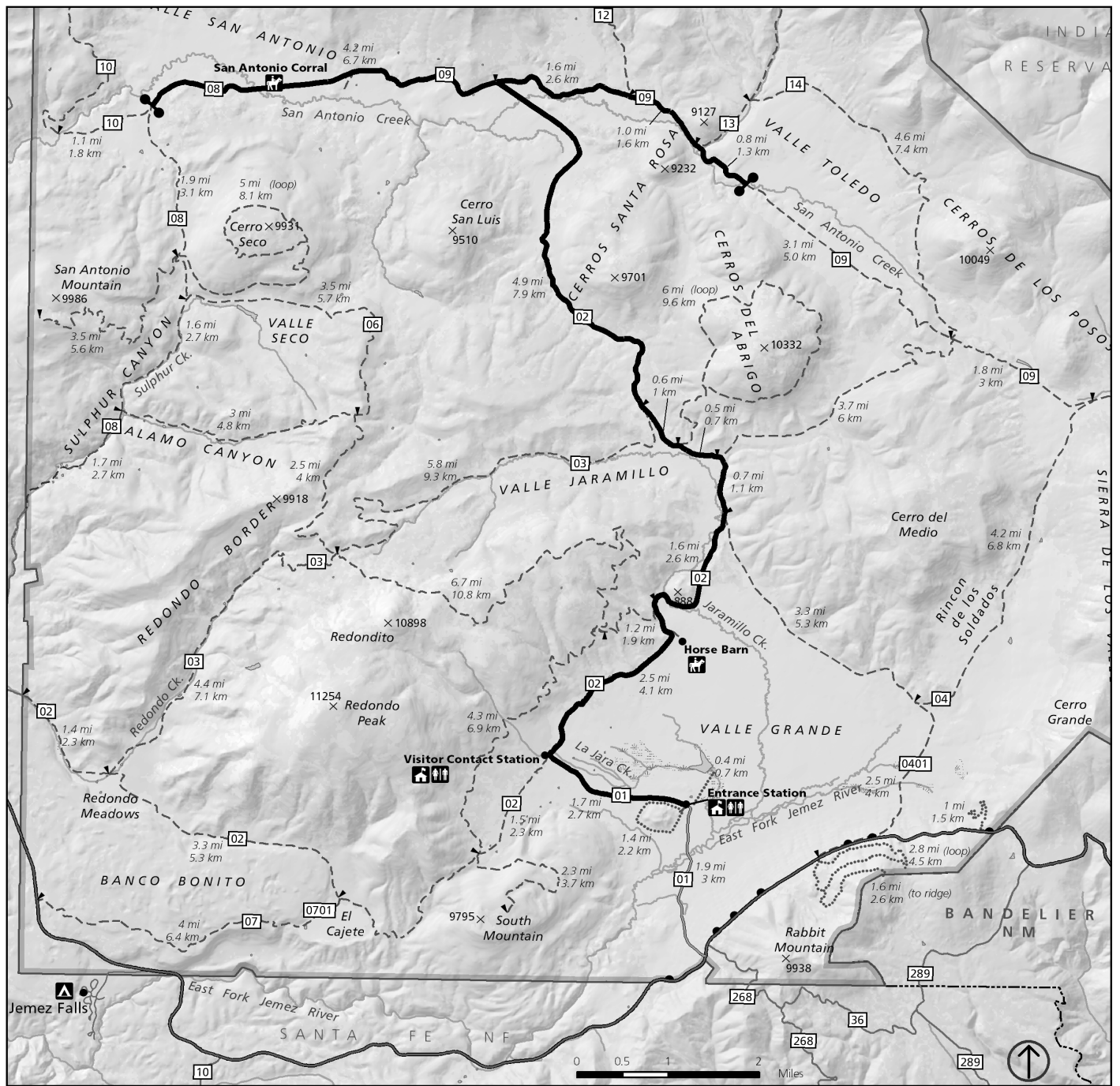
If you want to experience more of the diversity of plants and animals that call the preserve home, along with immersing yourself into the heart of the caldera, take a drive into the backcountry. You will find places for solitude, hear the running waters of the caldera's streams, touch rocks formed millions of years ago, and feel the immensity of this amazing national treasure. Heading into the backcountry also offers more opportunities for hiking, biking, fishing, horseback riding, photography, art, and other recreational opportunities.

Rules and Regulations

- Backcountry travel is limited to the summer season, which generally goes mid-May to the end of October each year.
- A backcountry vehicle permit is required to participate in this activity. Permits are available at the entrance station and are subject to weather, road, and other conditions.
- Practice 'Leave No Trace'. Always pack it out if you take it in. Leave the preserve as clean as you found it.
- All things within the preserve are protected. Collection of antlers, rocks, and cultural items is prohibited.
- Pets are prohibited beyond the entrance station. Service animals are permitted.
- The drivable route is a "T" that has 12 miles south to north and 10 miles across the top of the "T" running east to west. Many other tracks were ranch or logging roads and still look like roads, but they are now relegated to trail status. Driving is only allowed on the "T" route. Off-road vehicle use is prohibited.
- Parking is allowed anywhere along the route, as long as you don't block any roads, trails, or gates. Do not park on any tall flammable vegetation (catalytic converters get very hot can ignite grass or other flammable material).
- All vehicles must exit the preserve before the main gate closes every evening. Overnight use of the preserve is prohibited.

Cautions

- Cell phone reception is limited within the preserve. Plan accordingly.
- Much of the backcountry route is dirt road subject to erosion. Four-wheel drive is not required; however, high clearance is recommended. Use care and good judgment while driving.
- Weather conditions can change very rapidly on the preserve. Always have adequate clothing, water, and emergency items, such as a first aid kit, available. Never drive through running water.
- The maximum speed limit is 20 mph except when reduced in posted areas such as the area around the entrance station and through the historic cabin district.
- The "T" includes about 44 miles of driving and the nearest source of gasoline is 20 miles away in Los Alamos. Be sure you have adequate fuel in your vehicle before entering the backcountry.
- Other vehicles, foot traffic, bicycles, horses, wildlife, rocks, downed trees, and other impediments may be present on the road. Many areas of road are narrow and have poor visibility ahead. Be vigilant and prepared to stop and/or avoid any such impediments.
- Be courteous. Give others a wide berth and default the right-of-way to others as appropriate.



Helpful Information

- There are many wild animals on the preserve including elk, bear, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, badgers, and more. If you desire to view the animals, keep your eyes open and scan the diverse areas that you traverse. The preserve is also an excellent place for bird viewing. Bring your field guides or purchase one at the bookstore.
- The changing seasons present incredible wildflower and vegetation viewing. Be sure to spend time investigating the different areas of the preserve including the open valleys, wooded areas, and wetlands. Bring your field guides or purchase one at the bookstore.
- The Jaramillo Creek and San Antonio Creek in the backcountry are excellent streams for trout fishing. Please see the site bulletin about fishing for more information.
- Are you a fan of the Netflix series “Longmire”? If so, please visit the Ranch Foreman’s Cabin in the historic cabin district, where Longmire was filmed.
- All along the “T” there are many opportunities to hike on old ranch or logging roads that are now designated as trails. Please see our park map for more information. Hiking guides can be seen and/or purchased at the bookstore.

Emergencies

- Medical emergencies: Dial 911. Let them know you are in Sandoval County.
- Report all incidents to NPS law enforcement staff through NPS dispatch at 928-608-6301.
- All vehicles must exit the preserve before the main gate is locked every evening.
- Overnight use of the preserve is prohibited.