

Wilderness.net's Sespe Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Sespe Wilderness in 1992 and it now has a total of 219,209 acres. All of the wilderness is in California and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Sespe Wilderness provides ample evidence of past violent geological upthrusts. The landscape is bleak and jagged, and if you climb high enough, you'll find pine trees growing at odd angles on boulder-swept hillsides. Sespe Creek, the last remaining undammed river in Southern California, runs for 31.5 Wild and Scenic miles (most of it in the Wilderness), and 10.5 miles of Upper Sespe Creek are under consideration for designation. Sandstone cliffs rise as much as 500 feet above the water in places, and fabulous sandstone formations stand in portions of the area. You may see petroglyphs and other evidence of ancient Indians. You might also spot black bears, deer, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, rattlesnakes, red-tailed hawks, and golden eagles. The 53,000-acre Sespe Condor Sanctuary is located here, but public entry is prohibited to protect California condors. The wilderness area is a part of the fourth largest roadless region left in the Lower 48, and it's the one closest to a large metropolitan area. Numerous trails provide access, and human use is moderate. The Gene Marshall-Piedra Blanca National Recreation Trail leads 18 miles through impressive white rocks to pleasant campsites nestled in conifers, a boon when much of the area lies without shade. The Sespe River Trail (17.5 miles) leads past cool swimming holes that thin down to shallows in the dry period, and on to Sespe Hot Springs and some of the hottest natural water in America.

Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Sespe Wilderness.

1. [Plan Ahead and Prepare](#)
2. [Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces](#)
3. [Dispose of Waste Properly](#)
4. [Leave What You Find](#)
5. [Minimize Campfire Impacts](#)
6. [Respect Wildlife](#)
7. [Be Considerate of Other Visitors](#)

For more information on Leave No Trace, [Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.](#)

Area Management

The Sespe Wilderness is part of the 111 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and

animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Sespe Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

General Wilderness Prohibitions

Motorized equipment and equipment used for mechanical transport is generally prohibited on all federal lands designated as wilderness. This includes the use of motor vehicles, motorboats, motorized equipment, bicycles, hang gliders, wagons, carts, portage wheels, and the landing of aircraft including helicopters, unless provided for in specific legislation.

In a few areas some exceptions allowing the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport are described in the special regulations in effect for a specific area. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information.

These general prohibitions have been implemented for all national forest wildernesses in order to implement the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act requires management of human-caused impacts and protection of the area's wilderness character to insure that it is "unimpaired for the future use and enjoyment as wilderness." Use of the equipment listed as prohibited in wilderness is inconsistent with the provision in the Wilderness Act which mandates opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation and that wilderness is a place that is in contrast with areas where people and their works are dominant.

Wilderness-Specific Regulations

Wilderness managers often need to take action to limit the impacts caused by visitor activities in order to protect the natural conditions of wilderness as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Managers typically implement 'indirect' types of actions such as information and education measures before selecting more restrictive measures. When regulations are necessary, they are implemented with the specific intent of balancing the need to preserve the character of the wilderness while providing for the use and enjoyment of wilderness.

The following wilderness regulations are in effect for this area. Not all regulations are in effect for every wilderness. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed on the 'Links' tab for more specific information about the regulations listed.

ALL VISITORS

- Groups size is limited to no more than 25 people per party.
- Overnight visitors cannot occupy any single location longer than 14 days.
- A California Campfire permit is required. Campfires may be seasonally restricted.
- Do not shortcut switchbacks.
- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste.

-- As with all designated Wilderness, mechanical vehicles (including wagons, game carts, bicycles, and other vehicles) is prohibited.

Contacts

Ojai Ranger District

1190 E OJAI AVE
OJAI, CA 93023

Phone: 805-646-4348

Phone: 805-640-9060

Los Padres Forest Association

WHEELER GORGE VISITOR CENTER
17017 MARICOPA HWY
OJAI, CA 93023

Remarks: Saturdays and Sundays only

Phone: 805-968-6640

Los Padres National Forest

6750 NAVIGATOR WAY
SUITE 150
GOLETA, CA 93117

Links to Other Websites

[Los Padres National Forest Wilderness](#)

Links on Wilderness.net

[National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)

A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

[Career and Volunteer Opportunities](#)

A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
Public Law 102-301	June 19, 1992	219,700
Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act - Public law 102-301 (6/19/1992) Entitled the "Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act"		

 [download 102-301](#)