

Issue:  
FALL - WINTER 2007

# Red Rock CANYON

## Keystone Visitor Guide

NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

### Winter Water at Red Rock

WHILE RED ROCK CANYON SUMMERS CAN BE HOT, THE ARRIVAL OF THE FALL AND WINTER SEASONS BRING AN END TO EXTREME TEMPERATURES.

This relief is signaled by a cooler environment, but perhaps more importantly by an increase in seasonal rains which provide necessary moisture to all desert inhabitants.

As these changes take place, plants like desert almond and brittlebush return to color, seeming to spring back to life after their long summer fasts.

In fact, the pleasant smelling creosote bush is commonly associated with rain. As storms approach, pores in its leaves open up, creating an aroma as characteristic to the Mojave Desert as pine trees to the mountains.

In an area that only receives about three inches of rain annually, these rains are the lifeblood of the dry Mojave Desert.

However, sometimes even rain can be too much of a good thing. With little soil and dispersed vegetation, intense, localized rain can pour inches in hours, creating flash floods. Evidence for these events can be found in dry river

beds, called washes, where polished rocks and the lack of vegetation are proof to the scouring power of water.

These storms can strike unexpectedly, flooding roads and hiking trails. Visitors should be prepared with appropriate clothing and weather forecasts. Do not attempt to drive through flooded areas.

Even in wetter times, water can be scarce in the desert. Luckily, plants and animals can access other water sources. As part of the aptly named Spring Mountains, Red Rock Canyon contains 42 springs. Because much of the conservation area is made up of large grained sandstone rock, water from other areas can percolate through the earth to resupply rare permanent water sources.

These small pockets of water, surrounded by a sea of desert, allow for the fragile existence of riparian life, including the tiny Deacon's spring snail, a type of mariposa lily and rough angelica. These three species are

found in the Spring Mountains and nowhere else on earth. Please leave all plants and animals as you find them.

Wildlife such as bighorn sheep, mountain lions and coyotes can also find water in isolated rock depressions. Called tinajas, these shaded, cooler, sunken formations naturally gather rain water and can sometimes hold it year-round.

As the season progresses, also be prepared for snow. The accumulation of snow brings beautifully dusted mountain tops and later, seasonal waterfalls, but it is also accompanied by lower temperatures which require warmer, layered clothing.

The fall and the winter is a perfect time to visit the conservation area. Through hiking, bicycling, rock climbing, photographing, or driving, guests can experience the wealth of diversity that such water resources support.

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Photo: Ice Puddle  
by Alice Brocoum

### Upcoming Events

Red Rock Canyon hosts many fun and educational events for both visitors and volunteers. Hikes, interpretive presentations and other activities are offered every day. Volunteer opportunities are available year-round and canyon clean-ups area offered twice a month. Stop by the visitor center for more information.

From October through March, highlighted events include:

- ◆ **OCTOBER 5 TO DECEMBER 5**  
Annual Photo Contest winning selections displayed at Lloyd D. George Courthouse, Las Vegas
- ◆ **OCTOBER 20**  
Astronomy Program (evening viewing)
- ◆ **OCTOBER 27**  
Make a Difference Day (community volunteer event)
- ◆ **FEBRUARY 14**  
Red Rock Art contest entries due

### Hours of Operation

- ◆ **Visitor Center**  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day
- ◆ **13-Mile Scenic Drive, Red Rock Overlook on State Route 159 and Red Spring**  
**OCTOBER 1 - 31** 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
**NOVEMBER 1 - FEBRUARY 28** 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**MARCH 1 - MARCH 31** 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.



Photo: Coyote (Canis latrans)  
by Barron Haley



## Fall and Winter Safety Tips

Enjoying Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area to the fullest means enjoying your visit safely. Fall and winter recreation in the Mojave Desert present unique challenges. Being prepared will keep delays and unpleasant experiences to a minimum.

### Water

Drink at least one gallon (four liters) of water per day if you are hiking, the day is hot or the trail is exposed to direct sunlight. Dehydration can happen to hikers even in fall and winter due to low humidity. Bottled water is available for purchase at the visitor center. This is the only location where drinking water is available within Red Rock Canyon. Water in natural springs has not been tested and should be left for use by wildlife.

### Protective gear

For hiking, select shoes that provide a comfortable fit, ankle stability and protection against cactus spines. Wear clothes that provide protection against the sun, wind and cold temperatures. Dressing in layers is recommended since fall and winter can bring changeable weather. Rain, hail and snow flurries may occur during winter months, especially in February and March.

### Desert dwellers

Watch where you put your hands and feet. Rattlesnakes, scorpions or venomous spiders may be sheltered behind boulders or under rocks and shrubs. Do not touch, collect or try to kill these animals.

### General safety

Let friends or family members know where you are going and what time you expect to be back. Don't rely on cell phones during your visit as coverage in the area can be unreliable or non-existent, especially within canyons. Leave your valuables at home. If you leave your car, take your purse or backpack with you and lock your doors. Never leave packages in plain sight where they may tempt someone to break in to your vehicle.

Photo: Calico Basin by Javier Sanchez

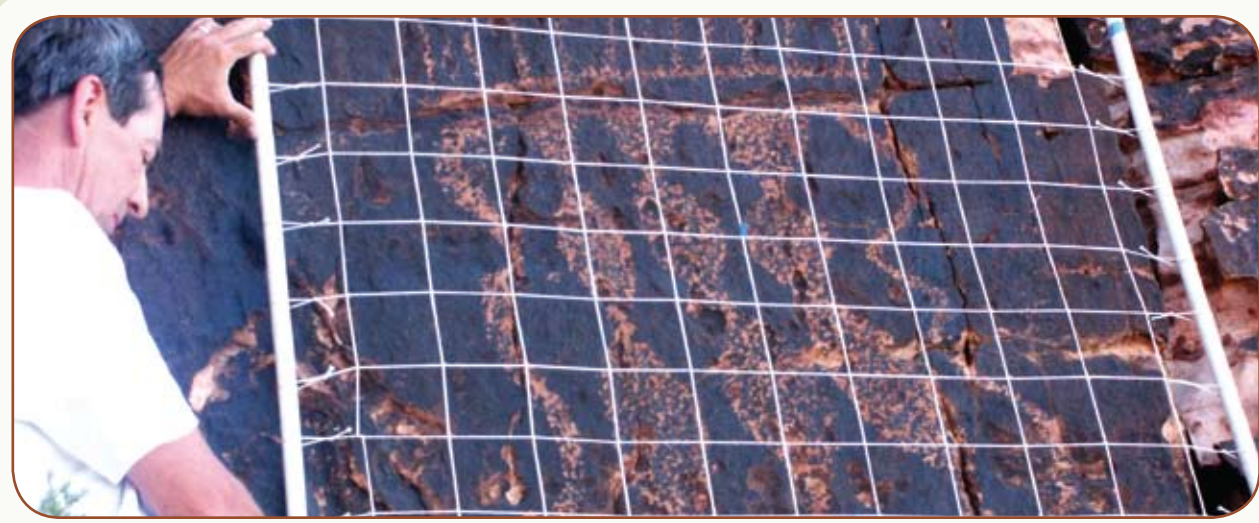


Photo: Volunteer Chuck Williams assists in the documentation of a petroglyph.

## Cultural Resources

Management by committee may be an oxymoron, but the efforts of the Friends of Red Rock Canyon's Cultural Resources Committee are getting fantastic results. The committee covers monitoring and recording archaeological sites in Red Rock Canyon NCA. This includes pre-historic as well as historic (such as the Spanish Trail) sites. Pre-historic sites include Native American roasting pits, rock shelters and rock art locations.

The Committee's activity has been focused mainly on recording rock art sites because these have been identified as the most sensitive and vulnerable to damage from natural elements or vandalism.

All committee members are required to attend a two day training session conducted by the Nevada Rock Art Association to help insure a high degree of quality and standardization of the recording process.

The recording process begins with mapping out the area that will be recorded. These areas are identified by a unique Smithsonian site number. For example, the red hand-prints at Willow Springs have a site number of 26Ck486. At present there are almost 8,000 sites identified in Clark County.

Committee members then measure each panel and provide detailed information such as GPS location, where the artifact is situated (boulder, cliff face, etc.), slope of the work surface, type of rock (sandstone, limestone, etc.), Petroglyph (chipped into the rock surface) or Pictograph (painted), panel orientation, destructive agents and other details.

An overall site sketch is drawn and each panel is then photographed with a photo board showing the site, panel number and date recorded. Lastly, panels are hand drawn using a meter grid broken into 10 centimeter squares (see photo). This ensures that the proportions of the artifact

are preserved and correctly represented. This is the most time consuming portion of the recording process. Generally it requires a number of field visits to complete the documentation process.

Non-field work includes inking of the drawings using archive-able paper and transcription of the field notes onto official site and rock art attachment forms.

The finished documentation, inked drawings and photographs are organized and placed in a notebook that is given to the BLM archeologist for storage and subsequent analysis.

Once a site has been recorded, follow up visits are scheduled by the Cultural Resource Committee to help protect the site and record any subsequent damage.

Sadly, vandalism sometimes happens and damage from this cause appears to be on the increase. Within the past year, vandals scratched over charcoal drawings located in a natural sandstone cave. The only positive aspect was that this was one of the sites where the committee had completed site documentation.

This spring, the committee volunteered to record an "at risk" rock art site in the Desert Wildlife Refuge for the US Fish and Wildlife Agency. This site is adjacent to a remote parking/camping area and several smaller boulders containing petroglyphs had been stolen. The team spent two ten-hour days at the site in order to finish the field documentation before additional damage or theft could occur. Should any of the petroglyphs be recovered in the future, this documentation may help considerably with subsequent legal proceedings.

Friends of Red Rock Canyon's Cultural Resources Committee, chaired by Gary Vetter, operates under the indirect supervision of Mark Boatwright, archaeologist for the BLM.

## Fees and Annual Passes

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area began collecting fees in 1998. The America the Beautiful Pass, which replaced the National Parks Pass, Golden Age, Golden Access and Golden Eagle began sales in 2007.

Below is a list of all passes that are available at the Red Rock Canyon entrance station:

- ◆ **DAILY FEE - \$5**  
Daily pass for Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Does not include overnight stays in the developed campground.
- ◆ **RED ROCK ANNUAL PASS - \$20**  
Yearly pass for Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Does not include overnight stays in the developed campground.
- ◆ **AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL PASS - \$80**  
The America the Beautiful pass is an interagency pass that will be honored by the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation.
- ◆ **AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL SENIOR PASS - \$10 one time fee**  
Lifetime pass for U.S. citizens who are 62 years and older to National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management sites.
- ◆ **AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL ACCESS PASS - FREE (obtain from ranger at the visitor center)**  
Lifetime pass for U.S. citizens who are 62 years and older to National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management sites. Pass provides 50 percent discount on campground fees.



Photo: Red Rock Sunrise by Konkrit Thusanapant

## Bureau of Land Management

THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM) MISSION IS TO SUSTAIN THE HEALTH, DIVERSITY AND PRODUCTIVITY OF PUBLIC LANDS FOR THE USE AND ENJOYMENT OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.



The BLM is responsible for almost 262 million acres of public land located primarily in the 12 Western states. BLM manages a variety of resources on these lands including energy and minerals; timber; wild horse and burro populations; fish and wildlife habitat; wilderness areas; and archaeological, paleontological and historical sites.

National Conservation Areas are designated by Congress to conserve, protect, enhance and manage public land areas for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM manages 13 National Conservation Areas nationwide. Red Rock is the most visited conservation area with more than one million visitors annually. The Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area includes 195,819 acres.

Nevada features two other national conservation areas: Sloan Canyon in Southern Nevada and Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails in Northeastern Nevada.

FOR INFORMATION ON PUBLIC LAND AND NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREAS, VISIT [WWW.BLM.GOV](http://WWW.BLM.GOV). FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RED ROCK CANYON, VISIT [WWW.NV.BLM.GOV/REDROCKCANYON](http://WWW.NV.BLM.GOV/REDROCKCANYON).

## Friends of Red Rock Canyon

THE MISSION OF FRIENDS OF RED ROCK CANYON (FRIENDS) IS TO SUPPORT THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE PROTECTION AND ENRICHMENT OF RED ROCK CANYON NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA.

Friends members have been active and productive partners at Red Rock Canyon since 1984. The all volunteer organization, with members in 25 states and two countries, has contributed more than 350,000 volunteer hours and almost \$1,000,000 in financial support that directly benefits Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

Friends of Red Rock Canyon are comprised of environmentally concerned individuals who care deeply about the conservation area. Some members join to financially support the programs and services at Red

Rock Canyon; other members join for the camaraderie, special 'members-only' events, and the satisfaction of making a lasting difference in an extraordinary place.

Friends of Red Rock Canyon members donate thousands of hours annually to both preserve and conserve Red Rock Canyon as well as to enrich your experience in this unique and rare place.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FRIENDS OF RED ROCK CANYON, PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE AT: [WWW.FRIENDSOFREDROCKCANYON.ORG](http://WWW.FRIENDSOFREDROCKCANYON.ORG).



"We're working today to protect tomorrow"

Friends of Red Rock Canyon is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation.

## Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association

THE MISSION OF RED ROCK CANYON INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION (THE INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION) IS TO ENHANCE THE RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM) BY PROVIDING MATERIALS AND SERVICES THAT PROMOTE AN UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF THE NATURAL HISTORY, CULTURAL HISTORY, AND SCIENCES OF RED ROCK CANYON NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA.

The Interpretive Association was founded in 1988, at the request of the BLM, to provide fund-raising capabilities for the support of outreach programs. The organization began with two employees operating a tiny retail space at the visitor center. Today, The Interpretive Association has more than 50 employees serving three federal agencies.

Leading interpretive hikes and programs, managing the scenic drive wayside sign project, operating the Red Rock Canyon Gift and Book Store, administering the fee

collection program and offering the highly successful "Desert Fossils" interpretive program for local seniors are some of the services provided by The Interpretive Association.

The Interpretive Association continues to increase its commitment to the BLM by facilitating special projects such as Red Springs restoration and creating new exhibits for the visitor center. The Interpretive Association also coordinates the award winning Mojave Max desert tortoise education program.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RED ROCK CANYON INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.REDROCKCANYONLV.ORG](http://WWW.REDROCKCANYONLV.ORG).

The Interpretive Association is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation.



## Las Vegas Valley Land Sales Fund Improvements at Red Rock

In 1998, the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act was passed. This innovative act created a disposal boundary in the Las Vegas Valley that enabled the Bureau of Land Management to dispose of public lands. Funds generated from these sales are used to increase the quality of life of Southern Nevada and its visitors by improving parks, trails and natural areas, supporting conservation initiatives, improving federally-managed facilities, creating habitat conservation plans and acquiring environmentally sensitive lands in Nevada in addition to providing funding for state education and the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and its visitors has been the beneficiary of these funds on nine projects.

Four projects at Red Rock have been completed: Red Rock Fire Station, upgrading exhibits at the visitor center, Red Spring Restoration and fencing along State Route 159 to keep wild horses and burros off the roadway. Projects underway include: expanding and providing utilities to the Red Rock Campground; adjusting the Cottonwood Valley trails network; creating an educational facility for school-aged children; creating a new visitor center at Red Rock and upgrading the scenic drive and paving a dirt road.

### Featured Project - New Visitor Center

Since the current visitor center was not designed to handle such a large number of visitors, a new visitor center was approved by the Secretary of the Interior under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act. Due to break ground

in 2008 the project will include an innovative outdoor exhibit themed by the four elements: earth, air, fire and water.



### Wild Burros

Many visitors enjoy seeing the burros in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. Burros are well adapted to the Mojave Desert and survive high temperatures and long periods of time without green forage by using shade under rocky cliffs and shrubs and by being most active in the early morning and late afternoon. They survive the apparent lack of water by seeking out the natural springs and hidden waterholes found throughout Red Rock Canyon. They eat grasses and shrubs. Burros are generally less than half the size of a horse. Males are called jacks and females are called jennies.

Feeding burros encourages these animals to congregate on roadways where many have been killed and injured by vehicles. Each year, people are injured by burros as they try to feed or pet these animals. Feeding burros also causes them to lose their natural fear of roads and cars. Every year, both burros and humans die from burro and automobile collisions due to this adaptation.

Burros are protected by the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971. People feeding, attempting to feed, riding, attempting to ride, handling, or otherwise harassing or disturbing wild horses or burros are subject to a citation.

#### TO OBSERVE THESE BEAUTIFUL WILD ANIMALS SAFELY:

- ◆ Pick a safe place to stop and pull completely off the roadway.
- ◆ Observe the burros from a distance. The safest place is from your car.
- ◆ Drive carefully and be cautious when you see animals on or near the road. Burros may step out in front of your car unexpectedly.
- ◆ Refrain from the temptation to feed or water these hardy desert creatures.
- ◆ If you have food in an open container, seal it if a burro approaches you.



Photo: Burro (Equus Asinus) by Irla Crowley

Photo: Red Rock Alps by Anne Carter



Photo: Chucker (Alectoris chukar) by Wilmer Hew

## Hiking Trail Descriptions

TRAIL NAME	LEVELS OF DIFFICULTY AND GAIN	APPROXIMATE ROUND-TRIP TIME AND DISTANCE
<b>1. MOENKOPI</b>	Easy 300 ft [90 m]	1.5 hours • 2 mi [3.2 km]
This trail starts to the west of the visitor center near a weather station. It offers panoramic views of the Calico Hills, the Spring Mountains and La Madre Mountains.		
<b>2. CALICO HILLS</b>	Easy - Moderate 400 ft [120 m]	1.5 - 3.5 hours • 2 - 6 mi [3.2-9.6km]
This trail can be accessed by parking at either Calico I, Calico II or near the entrance station. This trail offers access to sport climbing areas and the best close-up views of the Calico Hills.		
<b>3. CALICO TANKS</b>	Moderate 450 ft [140 m]	2 hours • 2.5 mi [4 km]
This trail starts at the Sandstone Quarry parking lot. It winds through a wash and there may be seasonal water present in a natural tank [tinaja] at the end.		
<b>4. TURTLEHEAD PEAK</b>	Strenuous 2,000 ft [600 m]	3.5 - 4.5 hours • 5 mi [8 km]
This trail starts at the Sandstone Quarry parking lot and follows the shoulder of the peak to the top [6,324 ft / 1,927 m]. The trail is intermittent and composed of loose rock.		
<b>5. KEYSTONE THRUST</b>	Moderate 400 ft [120m]	1.5 hours • 2.2 mi [3.5 km]
This trail is accessed from the upper White Rock Spring parking lot. It takes you to the most significant geologic feature of Red Rock Canyon - the Keystone Thrust.		
<b>6. WHITE ROCK - WILLOW SPRINGS</b>	Easy-Moderate 200 ft [60 m]	2.5 hours • 4.4 mi [7 km]
This trail starts at either the upper White Rock Spring parking lot or at the Willow Springs Picnic Area. Watch for wildlife that rely on these year-round springs.		
<b>7. WHITE ROCK / LA MADRE SPRING LOOP</b>	Moderate 890 ft [270 m]	3.5 hours • 6 mi [9.6 km]
This trail can be started at three places: the upper White Rock Spring parking lot, the Lost Creek Trail parking lot or Willow Springs Picnic Area. The north side of White Rock is one of the best areas for viewing bighorn sheep. You can connect to the La Madre Spring Trail to see a year-round spring.		
<b>8. LOST CREEK - CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY</b>	Easy - Moderate 200 ft [60 m]	55 minutes • 0.75 mi [1.2 km]
This moderately easy trail is a wonderful place to explore because of the variety of plant life and a number of cultural sites. Depending on the season, there may be a waterfall [January - March.] Also look for a pictograph and an agave roasting pit site. [Combination rocky, uneven terrain and boardwalk trail.]		
<b>9. WILLOW SPRINGS LOOP</b>	Easy 200 ft [60 m]	1.25 hours • 1.5 [2.4 km]
This trail can be started at either the Willow Springs Picnic Area or Lost Creek Trail parking lot. The trail passes several pictograph and agave roasting pit sites.		
<b>10. LA MADRE SPRING</b>	Moderate 400 ft [120 m]	2 hours • 3.3 mi [5.2 km]
This trail starts at the Willow Springs Picnic Area. The first segment involves walking up part of the 4x4 Rocky Gap Road. These springs are a good place to watch for wildlife, including desert bighorn sheep.		
<b>11. SMYC</b>	Moderate 300 ft [90 m]	2 hours • 2.2 mi [3.5 km]
This trail can be accessed from either the Lost Creek or Ice Box Canyon trails. It follows the terrain at the base of the escarpment and connects the two trails.		
<b>12. ICE BOX CANYON</b>	Moderate 300 ft [90 m]	2 hours • 2.6 mi [4.1 km]
The parking lot for this trail is at mile 8 on the 13-Mile Scenic Drive. This trail crosses open desert then enters the canyon. Unimproved trails in the canyon require some tricky rock scrambling where there may be seasonal waterfalls [January - March].		
<b>13. DALE'S</b>	Moderate 300 ft [90 m]	2.5 hours • 4.4 mi [7 km]
This trail can be accessed from either the Ice Box Canyon or Pine Creek Canyon trails. It follows the terrain at the base of the escarpment and connects the two trails.		
<b>14. PINE CREEK CANYON</b>	Easy - Moderate 300 ft [90 m]	2 hours • 3 mi [4.8 km]
This trail takes you across the open desert, past an old homestead site and into the canyon. You may find seasonal waterfalls. Unimproved trails in the canyon require some tricky rock scrambling.		
<b>15. FIRE ECOLOGY</b>	Easy 200 ft [60 m]	55 minutes • 0.75 mi [1.2 km]
This trail branches off the Pine Creek Canyon Trail. It is a short, figure eight trail that goes through a stand of Ponderosa Pine where a controlled burn took place.		
<b>16. OAK CREEK CANYON</b>	Easy - Moderate 200 ft [60 m]	1.5 hours • 2 mi [3.2 km]
To access this trailhead, take the Oak Creek turnoff from the scenic drive onto a dirt road. The trail then heads through open desert to the mouth of the canyon. Unimproved trails lead deeper into the canyon. Oak Creek is also accessible from State Route 159.		
<b>17. ARNIGHT</b>	Moderate 300 ft [90 m]	1.5 hours • 2.4 mi [3.8 km]
This trail can be started at the Oak Creek Canyon parking lot or by hiking the Pine Creek Canyon Trail. It connects the Oak Creek parking lot with the end loop of the Pine Creek Canyon Trail.		
<b>18. KNOLL</b>	Moderate 300 ft [90 m]	2.5 hours • 3.5 mi [5.6 km]
The shortest and easiest way to access this trail is by taking the Oak Creek Canyon Trail. This trail links the upper section of the Arnight Trail with the Oak Creek Canyon Trail, following the base of the escarpment.		
<b>19. FIRST CREEK CANYON</b>	Easy - Moderate 300 ft [90 m]	2 hours • 3 mi [4.8 km]
This trailhead is on State Route 159 [W. Charleston Blvd.] 2.6 miles [4.1 km] southwest of the exit to the 13-Mile Scenic Drive. The trail leads to the mouth of the canyon. Seasonal streams and waterfalls can be found deep in the canyon on unimproved trails [January - March.]		

