



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RIDGECREST FIELD OFFICE



# SOUTH PARK CANYON - PLEASANT CANYON LOOP



**AREA INFORMATION:** This 4x4 vehicle trip is filled with an enormous amount of history. You may, just prior to your trip, purchase a book about the Panamint area. At some point during this trip the traveller will wonder "how did they do that". This trip will take about 6 hours, be sure to take all precautions, and leave your itinerary with someone prior to your departure. The scenery is great, especially arriving at some of the areas and looking across the various valleys. The canyon walls are also very intriguing, colorful and in the spring offering a wide variety of wildflowers, birds, and you may observe a burro or two. Proceed on your adventure and remember to be careful, and do not take any unnecessary chances.

**SO HERE WE GO:** Approximately 30 miles north of Trona on State Highway 178 is a stone monument on the right side of the road. This monument is a plaque discussing the town of Ballarat. Just past this sign is a paved road going east to the Ballarat townsite, approximately 3 miles. The listed mileages are for those with GPS receivers, navigation points for various places of interest along the trip. Portions of South Park Canyon road have been badly eroded by the El Nino storms of 1997-1998. If your 4x4 vehicle has stock size tires and does not have a suspension lift, anticipate vehicle body damage.

Mile 0: Ballarat city limit sign, take the "paved" road to the right.

Mile 3.8: Turn left onto a dirt road, and proceed up the hill. This is very steep, so place the vehicle in 1st gear, low range and proceed slowly.

Mile 7.2: The road to your left leads to the Suitcase Mine. This mine is still privately owned. **Remember all mines are dangerous.**

Mile 8.4: You have reached two cabins that are a part of the Adopt-A-Cabin program, the Briggs and Thorndike. Volunteers have worked hard to stabilize and rehabilitate the cabins for the convenience of the public. Use the cabins, but remember to clean up after your visit. Leave the cabins in better condition than you found them. After you leave the cabins, proceed up the hill to a shelf road with a bridge. Once you start up this hill, there is no place to turn around for the next one-half mile (1/2 mile).

Mile 9.2: On the right is the road leading to the Thorndike mine.

Mile 10.1: In this area is Colter Spring and the boundary of Death Valley National Park.

Mile 11.2: At this milepost is the northwest corner of South Park. The right hand fork of the road leads to what is called the runway. The road is deeply rutted, and if any recent rains, the road can be very muddy. This loop trip will take the road veering to the left and heading more easterly.

Mile 12.8: At this point, you are at a fork in the road at the east end of South Park. Straight ahead are the remains of cabins and a mine site. If you take this fork, you will enter Middle Park and then exit Middle Park into Pleasant Canyon. The fork on the right of the road heads southwesterly on this loop trip.

Mile 13.4: A habitable cabin with a unique double barrel stove is located at this site. The public can use this cabin if the owner is not present. From this cabin continue southerly. At the ridge line, the right hand fork takes you to an overlook of Striped Butte Valley. The left fork roughly follows the ridge line to Rodgers Pass. There are some very steep hills on this route, use common sense. Use low gears and slowly go up hills. Use low gears to slow your descent from the hills. This saves your brakes from fading and you have better steering control. In places you will be above 7,100 feet in elevation. In the winter there may be snow and ice on this route.

Mile 16.8: You are at Rogers Pass. A plaque has been installed discussing the immigrants coming west in the 1850's. The elevation is 6,430 feet and the top of Pleasant Canyon. At this point turn left, shift to a low gear and carefully descend the hill through the pinyon pines. During the winter snow drifts will be around the trees.

Mile 18.1: On the left is Rita's cabin. If traveling through Middle Park, you enter Pleasant Canyon at this point.

Mile 19.7: There is a good water supply named Stone Corral on the left. At one time, there was a stone corral in the vicinity for livestock. The pipe leading down the hill was the water supply for the World Beater Mine. You are now leaving Death Valley National Park.

Mile 21.0: The road to the left leads to the World Beater Mine. This was a very productive gold mine around the turn of the century. There was a 10 stamp mill near the mine before some vandals burned the structure in the late 1980's

Mile 21.9: Claire Camp is the mill site and living quarters for the Radcliffe Mine. The mine is located on top of the hill to the southeast. The tram towers and cables leading to the mine are still visible. The area was well kept when "Frenchy" was the caretaker of the site. When he married and left the canyon, vandals have slowly damaged the area.

Mile 27.6: Ballarat City limits sign, the point where your adventure began.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** While you are within the boundaries of Death Valley National Park, you must adhere to their regulations.

The Briggs and Thorndike cabins are available on a first come, first served basis. Visitors are asked to stay no more than 2 nights and help in keeping the cabins clean.

The signs indicating "Wilderness" and "Closed Road" or "Closed Route" are placed at various intervals. Vehicles can be parked outside the wilderness boundary; however, the boundary is set back 30 feet on unmaintained dirt roads, and 300 feet on paved roads.

Mechanized or motorized vehicles are NOT PERMITTED in a wilderness.

Hunting, fishing and non-commercial trapping are allowed under state and local laws.

Pets are allowed, but please keep your pets under control at all times.

Horses are permitted, however, you may be required to carry feed.

Private lands may lie within the wilderness, PLEASE respect the owner. DO NOT use these lands without permission.

Removal, disturbance, or attempting to remove archaeological materials is a felony. Selling, receiving, purchasing, transporting, exchanging, or offering to do so is prohibited by law.

**CAMPING:** Camping is permitted, limited to 14 days. After 14 days, campers must relocate at least 25 miles from previous site.

Gathering wood for campfires, when permitted, is limited to dead and down materials. Live vegetation can not be cut.

Practice *Leave No Trace* principles:



- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Camp and Travel on Durable Surfaces
- Pack It In Pack It Out
- Properly Dispose of What You Can't Pack Out
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Use and Impact of Fires

For additional information contact:  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 Ridgecrest Field Office  
 300 S. Richmond Rd.  
 Ridgecrest, CA 93555  
 Telephone: 760-384-5400

Or visit our Outdoor Recreation website at:  
[www.ca.blm.gov/ridgecrest/recreation.html](http://www.ca.blm.gov/ridgecrest/recreation.html)

