



Friends of the Desert Mountains

Hello and thank you for considering participation in our “Thursday Morning Hikes” program!

Scheduled to run year round, participants meet at the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center on Hwy 74 in Palm Desert at 8:30 am. (During the hot months of May through September, we run early morning hikes at 6:00 a.m. to avoid the heat). The hikes are lead by a guide and normally last between one to two hours. When participants range in ability and we have enough hike leaders, we have two main trails for participants to choose from:

The **Randall Henderson Loop Trail** is a **relatively easy 2.9-mile hike with a fairly gradual 200-300 foot elevation gain** and descent. The trailhead is located off the Visitor Center driveway, and the trail proceeds east & south-east, up onto a ridge. From that point, there is a gorgeous view of the Coachella Valley, the Visitor Center, and the Deep Canyon / Reserve area.

The **Art Smith Trail** is more of a **moderate hike due to some strenuous uphill sections at two different points on the trail**. We catch this trail just west of the Visitor Center, across Highway 74, and continue approximately 45-minutes up the trail, to the point where it connects with the **“Hopalong Cassidy” trail** (which proceeds north toward the area where it links up with the **“Bump and Grind” trail**). From that point, there is a gorgeous view of the Coachella Valley from above the Bighorn development. From the **Art Smith/Hopalong Cassidy Junction**, we generally begin making our way back down, making the distance covered on the **Art Smith/Hopalong Cassidy Junction hike**, **somewhere in the neighborhood of a 4-mile total distance with an approximate 500-foot elevation gain and descent**.

One other area we sometimes explore during the months of October through December, is **Carrizo Canyon** (south, south-east of the Visitor Center). This **relatively easy hike** explores areas normally off-limits to the public, and covers **approximately 3.5 miles through rocky wash and somewhat uneven terrain, on a trail that is not always completely defined; therefore, some may find this hike to be a little bit more difficult**. Elevation gain is approximately 250 feet.

Very Important Safety Information:

- It is strongly advised that all participants consult with their physician before commencing participation in any new form of exercise regimen, including these hikes. If you have not done so, or if you have not hiked consistently during the last year, or if you have any doubt in your mind whether hiking in the warm weather, on uneven terrain, and in a desert mountain environment, is appropriate for your individual health status, please do not participate in this event.
- Each and every participant should wear sturdy shoes (preferably hiking boots) and bring at least 48-ounces of water. Drinking extra water before the hike is a good idea.
- Wearing both a hat and sunscreen is highly recommended.
- It is also advisable that participants bring a backpack and a cellular phone.
- Although having a light breakfast of carbohydrates and fruits, etc., an hour or more before a hike is usually OK, eating a heavier breakfast immediately before hiking is not advisable, as it may lead to cramping and/or other stomach discomfort.
- All participants must sign-in and sign-out of each Thursday Morning Hikes activity.
- All hikers should stay on the designated trail at all times and carry out any waste.
- If you feel dizzy, short of breath, or otherwise unwell, please notify a hike leader or guide, take an opportunity to rest (in the shade if possible), and drink water.
- If you choose to either turn back early, or continue exploring on your own, we ask that you *please sign out with a designated hike leader before leaving the group*.
- If you see or hear a snake, slowly move away from it and calmly let others know about the hazard.