



SOUTHERN OVERLAND TRAIL

A Desert Corridor



Description:

(50-mile-long east-to-west route)

- System of southern desert routes from the Colorado River and points east to the Pacific coastal region, all incorporated into the Southern Overland Trail. This trail remains relatively intact in ABDSP but has been mostly obliterated elsewhere by modern development.
- Incorporates known prehistoric and historic locations as nodes along the network- Carrizo, Palm Spring, Vallecito, El Puerto, Box Canyon, San Felipe, and others. Several of the locations are extant or proposed Cultural Preserves. The section at Vallecito is the focus of Vallecito Days, an annual 3-day living history event, reenacting life on the 1850s desert frontier.
- Exemplifies human perseverance and adaptation in hostile desert regions: indigenous Peoples, Mexican and American military, Sonoran and Yankee gold-rushers, American emigrants in wagons, Overland Mail and Butterfield Stage, cowboys driving herds of cattle, early automobile travelers, and other pioneers traveled this route.
- Exemplifies culturally specific reasons and multiple and diverse rationales for traveling through the harsh desert:
 - Cyclical seasonal migrations of indigenous Peoples between environmental zones
 - Vast cultural landscape very important to today's Kumeyaay and Kwaaymii peoples, as well as other tribes from the Colorado River to the Pacific Coast
 - Traveled by 19th and early 20th century Europeans for economic, personal, military, religious, and communication reasons

Issues:

- Visitors will be guided to only those sections of the Southern Overland Trail where foot, bicycle, and equestrian traffic will not cause impacts.
- Portions of the Trail have been impacted by illegal recreation activities (i.e. off road four wheel driving.)

Recommendations:

- Cultural Preserve classification
- Auto-accessible sections of the Southern Overland Trail will be used as hiking, biking, and equestrian trails so that visitors may personally experience the landscape and conditions of early travel across the desert.

- Designated motor vehicle parking areas will be established at points along the Trail where visitors will enter those sections.
- Interpretive signing at these specific sections will present different aspects of the history of the Trail, quote from the diaries of early travelers, and urge visitors to see the landscape through the eyes of those travelers.
- A pamphlet available at the ABDSP Visitor Center, at sections of the Trail, and at other Cultural Preserves along the Trail, will outline the entire route and the important points of interest along the Trail, as well as points where visitors may enter.
- Visitors will be encouraged to post their own diary entries in a replica “historical diary” as part of interpretive and educational message.
- Camping and campfires will not be permitted within the Preserve
- Motor vehicle use will be prohibited within the Preserve boundaries.