

# Palomar Mountain State Park

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## Palomar Mountain State Park

19952 State Park Road

Palomar Mountain, CA 92060

(760) 742-3462 or (760) 765-0755



The beautiful forest and mountain meadows of Palomar Mountain State Park are in northern San Diego County on the west side of Palomar Mountain. Large pine, fir and cedar trees make the park one of the few areas in southern California with a Sierra Nevada-like atmosphere. Elevation within the park averages 5,000 feet above sea level, making evenings cool even during the summer. A number of vista points offer sweeping panoramic views both westerly toward the ocean and inland toward the desert.

From Highway 76, either of two roads can be used to reach the park. The one from Rincon Springs (County Road S6) is scenic but rather steep and winding. County Road S7 from Lake Henshaw is longer, but its gentle grade makes it more suitable for heavily loaded vehicles and those pulling trailers.

To the east, beyond the limits of the park, is the world-famous Palomar Observatory and the highest point of the 6,100-foot mountain. Many park visitors make the eight-mile trip up the road to the observatory, which is operated by the California Institute of Technology. The observatory is open to the public free of charge from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily.

## HISTORY

Deep, well-worn bedrock mortars and metates in Doane Valley are reminders of those many centuries when Luiseño Indians maintained seasonal villages, hunted game and gathered acorns and other seed crops here on the slopes of Palomar Mountain. The village sites and ten smaller, temporary

camp or gathering stations have been identified within the present-day park. At least two separate groups of Luiseños are known to have established exclusive territories on the mountain. The area around Boucher Lookout was called T'ai. Iron Springs near Bailey Lodge was called Paisvi. Other areas were known as Chakuli, Malava and Ashachakwo. These areas were used during the summer and early autumn for hunting and gathering acorns, pine seeds, elderberries and grass seeds. The main Luiseño village at the foot of the mountain was called Pauma.

Sturdy conical houses known as wikiups or kecha kechumat were made of pine poles covered with bark. Semi-subterranean "sweat houses" were centrally located in the village and used for purification and curing rituals. Handcrafted products included clay jars, woven baskets, throwing sticks, nets for fishing or carrying, bows and arrows and a variety of utensils for cooking and eating. The Luiseños called this mountainous area Wavamai, but when the Spaniards arrived in the 19th century, they named it Palomar, or "place of the pigeons," a reference to the thousands of bandtailed pigeons that nested in the area.

In 1798 Mission San Luis Rey was established four miles upstream from the mouth of the San Luis Rey River. Pines and firs from Palomar Mountain were used in its construction. An outpost, or *assistencia*, was established at Pala in 1816. Father Antonio Peyri, the Franciscan missionary at Mission San Luis Rey from 1798 to 1832, spent several weeks each year working with the Indians who lived in or near what is now Palomar Mountain State Park. He was persuasive

and soon came to be greatly loved, but the mission way of life both here and elsewhere in California had some terrible effects on the Luiseños. The sudden and complete disruption of age-old living patterns, as well as the introduction of European diseases, quickly resulted in a severe decline in the population. The mission was closed down in 1834 when Governor Figueroa issued direct orders to "secularize" all of the California missions. Today many descendants of the mission period Luiseños live on nearby reservations and continue to follow the Catholic religion though they also maintain some of their earlier cultural and religious beliefs and practices.

In 1846 the slopes of Palomar Mountain were included, at least theoretically, in the famous Warner Ranch. In 1851, however, the Indians drove Warner off the land. For a time thereafter, cattle and horse thieves used the remote mountain meadows of Palomar to shelter their stolen animals until it was safe to take them across the border into Mexico.

Nathan Harrison, a black slave who came to California during the gold rush, took up residence as a free man near the eastern edge of the present park in the 1860s. He grew hay and raised hogs in Doane Valley despite frequent trouble with bears and mountain lions. At the time of his death in 1920, he was said to be 101 years old. The old road from Pauma Valley is named in his honor.

George Edwin Doane came into the area in the early 1880s and built a shake-roof log cabin in the little clearing between Upper and Lower Doane Valley in what is now the Doane Valley Campground. Doane grew hay and raised cattle and hogs on his 640 acres of meadowland, and some of the apple trees

he planted survive to this day. During the southern California land boom of the 1880s and afterward, many other people also settled on Palomar Mountain. Four apple orchards within the park date from this period, as do the remains of Scott's cabin on Thunder Ridge.

Palomar Mountain State Park was created during the early 1930s, when 1,683 acres of what has been called "the most attractive part of the mountain" was acquired for state park purposes. Matching funds for this acquisition were provided by San Diego County and a group of public-spirited citizens known as the Palomar Park Association. Many of the roads, trails and picnic facilities that are in use to this day were built during the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

## NATURAL HISTORY

Some 40 inches of rainfall each year supports a wonderful forest on the slopes of Palomar Mountain, including big cone Douglas fir, white fir, incense cedar, live oak, black oak, coulter pine and yellow pine.



Flowering trees and shrubs include western dogwood, azalea and wild lilac (both purple



and white), with juncus grass, goldenrod, lupine, buttercups and penstemons in the meadow areas.

The most commonly seen wildlife in the park includes southern mule deer, western gray squirrels, raccoons and striped skunks. Predators such as gray foxes, coyotes, bobcats and even mountain lions are also present, but are not often seen. Doane Pond is stocked with trout and also contains bluegill, bullhead and channel catfish.

The three-quarter-mile Doane Valley Nature Trail provides a good opportunity to become familiar with many of this area's most common trees and shrubs. During the summer guided nature walks and campfire programs also provide opportunities to learn more about the cultural and natural history of this area. For further information about the interpretive programs, contact the park staff.

## CAMPING

There are 31 campsites in the Doane Valley Campground, three of which have accessible features. Each site has a table and fire ring. Piped drinking water is available. The campground also has restrooms with flush toilets and hot showers, which are useable for campers with disabilities. The Cedar Grove Group Campground includes three separate areas with one accessible site and restroom. Group Camp number one will accommodate up to 25 people; the others will accommodate up to 15 people each. Group Camp number one will accommodate trailers and camper vans up to 21 feet in length; the other group camps are suitable for tent camping only. Parking is limited. The U.S. Forest Service operates two campgrounds on

Route S6 outside the park on the way to the observatory. For information regarding these sites, contact the Palomar Mountain District Office, Goose Valley Ranger Station at (760) 788-0250.

## CAMPSITE RESERVATIONS

Campsites can be reserved up to seven months in advance of arrival by calling 1-800-444-7275. Visa®, MasterCard® and Discover®Card are accepted. From outside the USA, call (916) 638-5883. Persons with hearing impairments can call TDD number: 1-800-274-7275.

## PICNICKING

Silvercrest picnic area, near park headquarters, has wood stoves, piped drinking water and restrooms. Gathering of dead wood or other plant material is not permitted. Firewood must be brought into the park or purchased from the park staff. Day-use hours are 8:00 a.m. to sunset.

## RECYCLING

Recycling containers are located near the trash cans. Please help us conserve resources by separating your recyclables before throwing your trash away.

## FISHING

Doane Pond is open year-round and is stocked with trout. Fishing is especially good during the winter, spring and early summer. Fishing is not permitted at night. A valid California fishing license is required.

There is also informal picnicking near the pond, with several tables and grills, a restroom and a parking lot. Fishing hours are from 6:00 a.m. to sunset.



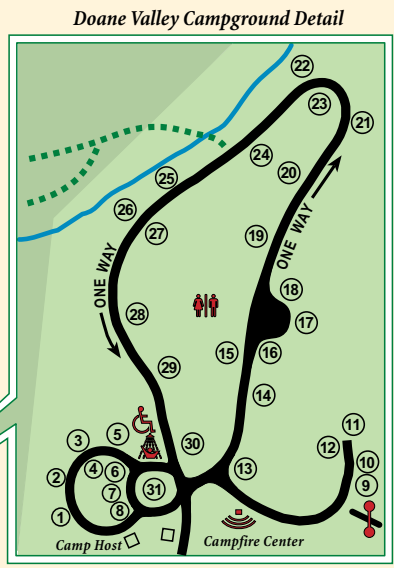
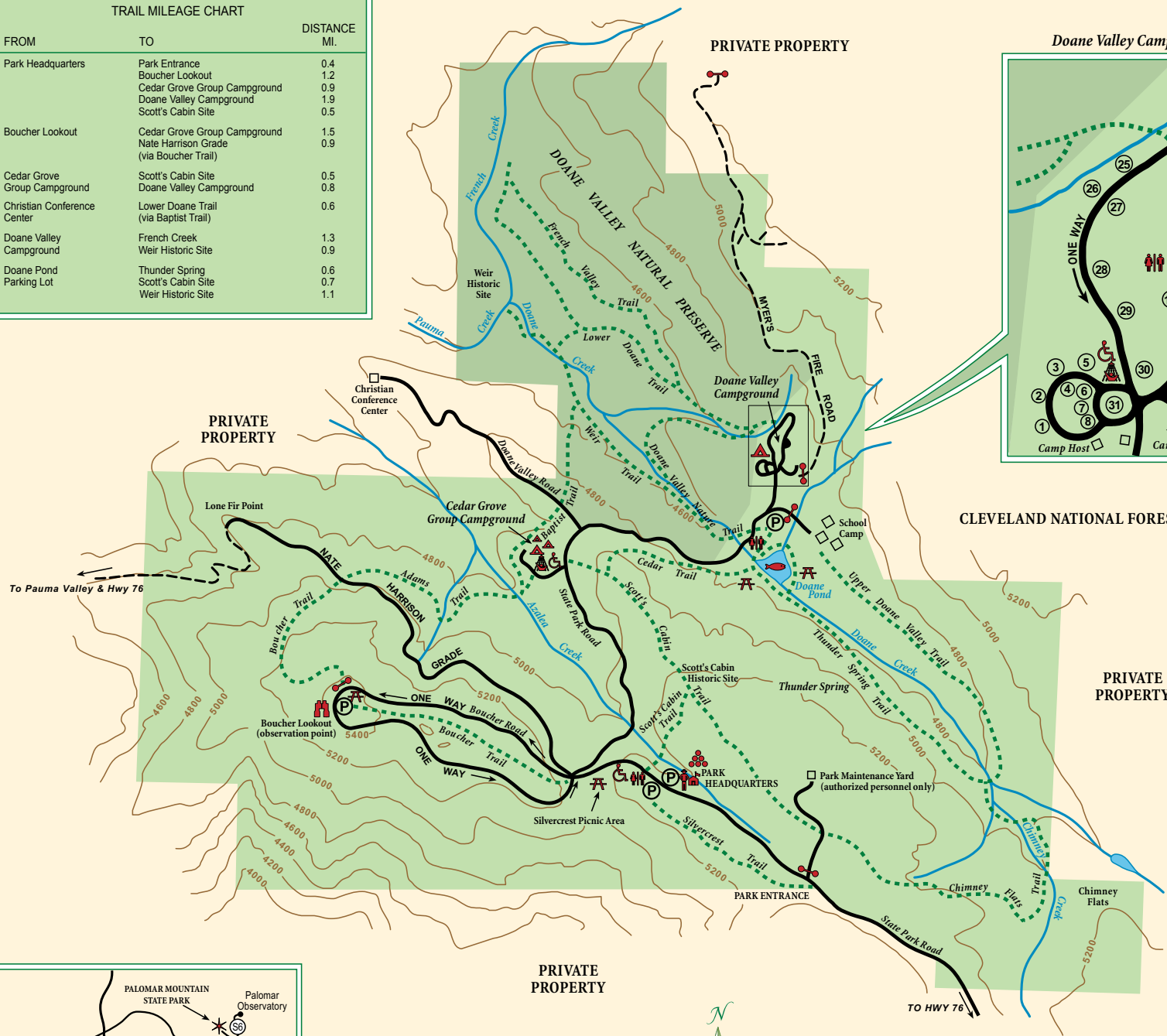
## TRAILS

A variety of hiking trails is available within the park. Some lend themselves to short, leisurely walks and others are suitable for vigorous, all-day hikes. The scenery includes open meadows and thick coniferous or oak forests. Trails are open to foot traffic only. Dogs and mountain bikes are not allowed on trails.

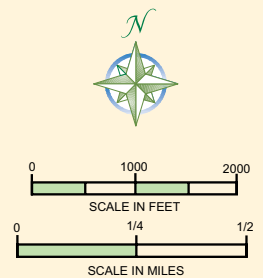
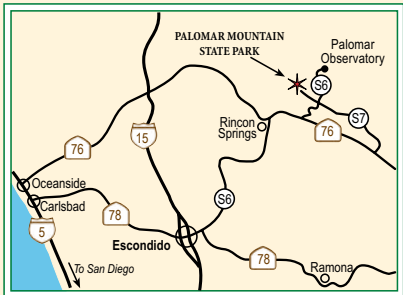
## DOGS

Dogs must be kept on leash at all times (six-foot maximum length) and are not permitted on trails. They are permitted on the Myers Fire Road as far as the park boundary. They must be kept in your tent or vehicle at night.

TRAIL MILEAGE CHART		
FROM	TO	DISTANCE MI.
Park Headquarters	Park Entrance	0.4
	Boucher Lookout	1.2
	Cedar Grove Group Campground	0.9
	Doane Valley Campground	1.9
	Scott's Cabin Site	0.5
Boucher Lookout	Cedar Grove Group Campground	1.5
	Nate Harrison Grade (via Boucher Trail)	0.9
Cedar Grove Group Campground	Scott's Cabin Site	0.5
	Doane Valley Campground	0.8
Christian Conference Center	Lower Doane Trail (via Baptist Trail)	0.6
Doane Valley Campground	French Creek	1.3
	Weir Historic Site	0.9
Doane Pond	Thunder Spring	0.6
Parking Lot	Scott's Cabin Site	0.7
	Weir Historic Site	1.1



- PAVED ROADS
- DIRT ROADS
- TRAILS
- PARKING AREA
- PICNIC AREA
- CAMPGROUND
- GATE
- FISHING
- RESTROOMS
- RESTROOMS WITH SHOWERS
- ACCESSIBLE FEATURE
- CAMPFIRE CENTER
- VIEWPOINT
- WOOD SALES



This park supported in part by a nonprofit organization. For more information contact: Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Interpretive Association • P.O. Box 204 Descanso, CA 91916 • [www.cuyamaca.us](http://www.cuyamaca.us)