John Muir once remarked that the view from Mount San Jacinto "was the most sublime spectacle to be found anywhere on this earth."

Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

GRAY DAVIS
Governor

MARY D. NICHOLS
Secretary for Resources

RUTH COLEMAN
Acting Director, California State Parks

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Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

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(916) 653-6995, outside the U.S.
(888) 877-5378, TTY
(888) 877-5379, without TTY

www.parks.ca.gov

Mount San Jacinto State Park
25905 Highway 243 (park)
P.O. Box 308 (mail)
Idyllwild, CA 92549
(951) 659-2607 • (951) 443-2423

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Mt. San Jacinto
State Park

When you enter Mount San Jacinto State Park, you come into the heart of an extensive wilderness area high in the San Jacinto Mountains. Reached via Highway 243 from Idyllwild or by tram from Palm Springs, this 14,000-acre park and wilderness with its granite peaks, sub-alpine forests, and mountain meadows offers the best opportunity to enjoy a primitive high-country experience south of the Sierra Nevada range.

The peak of Mount San Jacinto, a giant, often snow-capped crag marked by great upthrusts of weathered granite, rises almost 11,000 feet above sea level. It is the highest peak in the San Jacinto Range and the second highest point in southern California.

San Jacinto looms above a vast desert

Several other peaks within the park are over 10,000 feet, and much of the rest of the park, standing at more than 6,000 feet in elevation, is cool and comfortable in the summer.

From the Tramway Mountain Station, you can see Palm Springs, green with golf courses and agriculture made possible through irrigation of the Coachella Valley. The vistas from the park sweep on into the desert beyond Palm Springs for more than a hundred miles, and extend south-east to the Salton Sea and beyond into the Imperial Valley. John Muir once remarked that this unmatched view was "the most sublime spectacle to be found anywhere on this earth."

The northeast face of the San Jacinto Range plunges down 9,000 feet in less than four miles, making it one of the steepest and most spectacular mountains in North America. For those without the skills to climb such a cliff, there is the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. One of the largest and longest single-lift passenger tramways in the world, it lifts passengers 2.5 miles from Valley Station in Chino Canyon near Palm Springs, to Mountain Station, on the edge of the Mount San Jacinto wilderness area. After a lift of nearly 6,000 feet, visitors find themselves in a world quite different from the valley below. For the casual visitor, a ride on the tram is like being transported to an island in the sky where there is a restaurant and gift shop. The open trail beckons those who are prepared to explore forests dotted with small meadows.

Modern tram cars whisk you up to 8,500 ft.

GEOLOGY

Similar to the Sierra Nevada, the San Jacinto Mountains rest on a major fault block with a distinct westward tilt. The entire San Jacinto region—bounded on the west by the San Jacinto Fault and on the north and east by the San Andreas Fault—is seismically active and slowly rising.

HISTORY

Native Americans used the area as a seasonal hunting ground, making use of its wooded canyons and protected valleys. Their trails still cross the mountain, and several bedrock mortars can be seen in or near the park. They date back hundreds and perhaps thousands of years, giving evidence of long-term human habitation.

Enjoy snowshoeing and crosscountry skiing

European settlers at first used the high country in much the same ways as the native Americans had, hunting the abundant deer and bighorn sheep. Later, loggers began to strip the ridges of pine while domestic sheep and cattle grazed on the fragile mountain meadows. In 1897 President Grover Cleveland created the San Jacinto Forest Reserve to help contain and control these abuses. In 1907 it became the San Jacinto National Forest. When the California State Park System was established in 1927, a San Jacinto state park became a priority. In 1937 the first 12,695 acres acquired for the park were designated as a unit of the State Park System.

In 1945 the California legislature passed a bill authorizing construction of the aerial tramway, which was finally completed in 1963. Visitors to the park can now take a tram ride of less than 15 minutes and experience a series of biotic communities equivalent to a trip from Mexico's Sonoran Desert to an alpine wilderness.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

After a short walk from the tram station to Long Valley, you will reach the Ranger Station, a picnic area with barbecue stoves and restrooms, an adventure center, a self-guiding nature trail, and the Desert View Trail, which offers panoramas of the Coachella Valley.

For the visitor with time and energy, the park offers an extensive trail system designed and developed over the years to minimize the impact on scenic and wilderness values. Two of the most popular hikes are the Deer Springs Trail (via Suicide Rock Trail) to Suicide Rock, a moderate hike of 3.3 miles with a 1,700-foot elevation gain, and the Marion Mountain Trail to San Jacinto Peak, a strenuous day hike at 5.3 miles with a 4,400-foot elevation gain. All hikers must have permits to enter the wilderness.

WEATHER

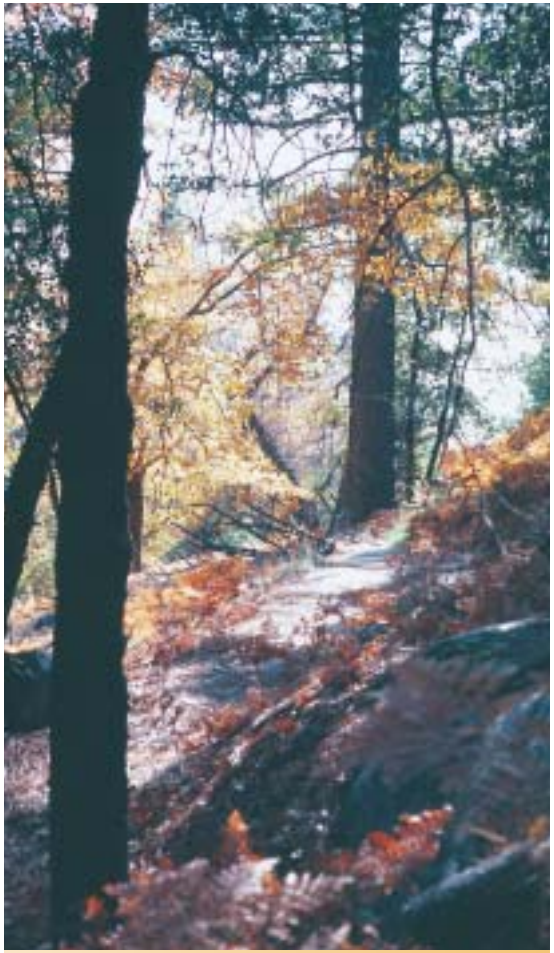
Expect summertime highs in the mid-70s with occasional hot spells reaching the low 90s. Evening temperatures generally fall into the mid-50s. Winter is cold with sudden severe snow activity and temperatures occasionally dropping near zero. Winter camping demands preparation and good equipment. Mt. San Jacinto is a popular holiday destination, so expect long lines for the aerial tramway.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES ♿

Accessible conditions are constantly improving. Call the park for the latest information.

CAMPING

Regardless of whether you drive or hike, you can camp in the San Jacinto Mountains year-round. State park campsites at Idyllwild and Stone Creek may be reserved by calling (800) 444-7275 up to seven months before your arrival date. For most summer periods, two to three weeks lead time will allow you to reserve a developed campsite. Holiday weekends are in great demand and should be reserved as soon as possible. Midweek there are often sites available first-come, first-served. Sites will accommodate motor homes or trailers up to 24 feet long.



Hikers enjoy over 35 miles of trails

United States Forest Service (USFS) campsites may be reserved by calling (877) 444-6777. Reservations for Idyllwild County and Hurkey Creek County Campgrounds can be made by calling (951) 787-2553.

HIKE-IN CAMPING

You must have a permit to camp in the wilderness. Permits are free and serve to limit entry to the park, assuring solitude and protecting the wilderness. The USFS and California State Parks manage different areas of the Mt. San Jacinto Wilderness. Camping permits must be obtained from the agency that administers the area where you plan to camp. Overnight permits issued by either agency are honored for daytime travel through the other agency's lands.

In the state wilderness areas, camping is permitted in designated sites only, and no open fires are allowed. In USFS areas the permit is good for one of five camping zones. You must locate your campsite at least 200 feet from trails and other campers and 200 feet from meadows and streams. Only holders of a USFS wood fire permit who are occupying specific campsites are permitted to build wood fires. Permits may be obtained at the USFS ranger station.

Day-use permits can be obtained on the day of your trip by visiting one of the ranger stations shown on the map. These permits are honored by both agencies except during the summer, when day-use permits to enter the wilderness via Devil's Slide Trail can only be obtained from the USFS.

GROUP CAMPING

Group size in the wilderness is limited to a maximum of 15 people (12 for USFS), and only one permit is issued for each group. Please be aware that snow normally covers the wilderness from December through April. High winds and temperatures below zero are common. Come well equipped, because even in the summertime the unpredictable weather can suddenly become threatening. Water quality varies greatly; boil or treat water before drinking it.

Camping permits can be obtained in advance by mail or in person at the ranger station. Write to:

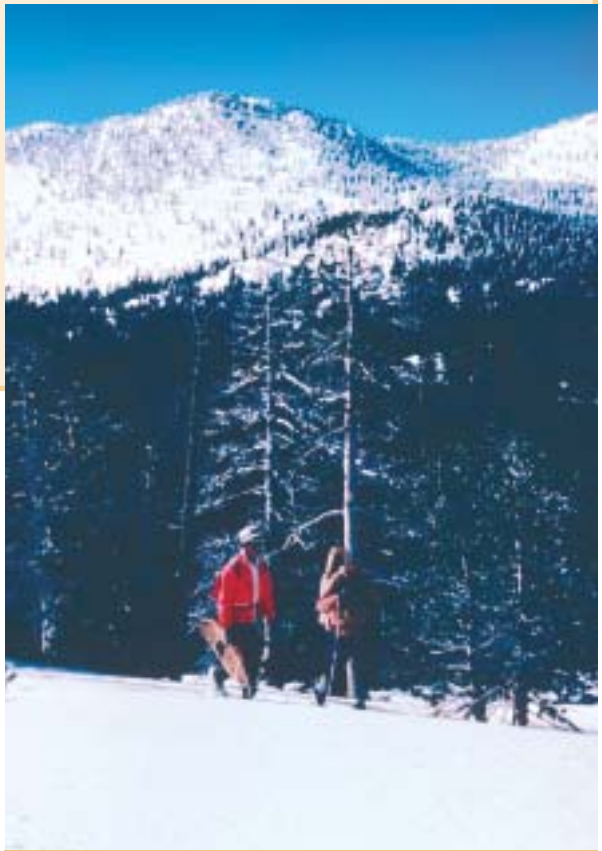
Mt. San Jacinto State Park
P.O. Box 308
Idyllwild, CA 92549

U.S. Forest Service Headquarters
P.O. Box 518
Idyllwild, CA 92549

Historic California Conservation Corps ranger station in Round Valley

PLEASE REMEMBER

- **Permits**–You must have a permit to enter the wilderness.
- **Litter**–Pack out all trash and garbage.
- **Sanitation**–Bury human waste at least eight inches deep and at least 200 feet from the nearest drainage, trail or camp. In the state wilderness, use the pit toilets in camp areas.
- **Waste Water**–Wash dishes and dispose of waste water at least 100 feet from any stream, spring, or faucet.
- **Trails**–Stay on trails. Help preserve plants and prevent erosion by not making shortcuts.
- **Horses**–Equestrians must pack in weed-free feed; grazing in the meadows is prohibited.
- **Smoking**–No smoking on trails. You may smoke in your campsite, but be sure that smoking materials are completely out.
- **Hunting**–The wilderness is a state game refuge; possession of firearms, bows and arrows, or slingshots is prohibited.
- **Dogs** are prohibited in the state wilderness. U.S. Forest Service wilderness allows dogs on leash or under your immediate control. **A U.S. Forest Service permit does not allow you to pass through the state wilderness with your dog.**
- **Fires** are prohibited in the state wilderness. Backpacking stoves are permitted. In U.S. Forest Service wilderness areas, you may build a fire only if you have a wood fire permit and only at specially marked campsites.
- **Motor vehicles and bicycles are prohibited.**



Snowshoeing

This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information contact:

Mt. San Jacinto Natural History Association - PMB141
225 N. El Cielo Road #140
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760) 323-3107

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
  east of San Diego via Highways 78 and 79
  (760) 767-5311
- Lake Perris State Recreation Area
  11 miles south of Riverside
  (951) 940-5603
- Salton Sea State Recreation Area
  25 miles southeast of Indio on Highway 111
  (760) 393-3059