

# News Release



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## Early Wildflower Blooms Appearing in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

*Enhance your experience with a guided tour*

BORREGO SPRINGS - Early blooms of sand verbena, popcorn flower, spectacle pod, brittlebush, chuparosa, and even the spectacular desert lily are popping up in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. "We anticipate the peak blooming season to hit between the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of February and the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March, depending on the weather," reports Michael Rodriques, the manager of the Park's Visitor Center. "For those who enjoy the thrill of the hunt and would like to beat the crowds, right now is the perfect time to visit. Little pockets of wildflowers are being found along roadsides, in sandy washes, and along trails in the Park."

When the bloom reaches its peak, the massive fields of wildflowers are found at the northern edge of Borrego Springs on Henderson Canyon Road and at the northern end of DiGiorgio Road, about ¼ mile beyond the end of the pavement. A great variety of wildflowers are found along washes or in the canyons of the Park. An off-road trip through the badlands, a hike up Borrego Palm Canyon or a trip to Plum Canyon may yield a startling array of wildflowers.

Lower elevation areas in the southern end of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park are currently seeing flower blooms in areas such as the Carrizo Badlands overlook at Sweeney Pass, the Bow Willow Campground, and Indian Valley

Call the Wildflower Hotline (760-767-4684) to get regularly updated information about this year's bloom. You can also visit Anza-Borrego Desert State Park's website ([http://parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=638](http://parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=638)) or Anza-Borrego Foundation and Institute's website ([www.theABF.org](http://www.theABF.org)) for wildflower sightings and locations that are updated weekly.

If you plan to see the desert wildflowers with a large group this spring, schedule a guided tour with a naturalist who can take you to the lesser known hot spots in the Park. Anza-Borrego Foundation and Institute's **Step-On Naturalist** program tailors trips especially for those visiting on tour buses and in groups of twenty or more. Avoid the crowds by venturing out early with an expert to explore, learn about, and enjoy the vast wilderness of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. At the cost of \$10 per person, you will gain the expertise of a botanist specializing in plants of the Anza-Borrego Desert region. Contact Kelley Jorgensen at (760)767-4961 or visit [www.theABF.org](http://www.theABF.org) for more information about this unique opportunity.

Tours focus on a variety of topics including geology, general botany, and prehistoric animals of the Anza-Borrego Desert. Park naturalists lead half day or full day tours which can be catered to the needs of your group. Tours of the Park's distinctive Visitor Center are also available. If you need 4WD transportation for your trip, consider a licensed Park tour with **California Overland**, who will take you on a special wildflower route through varied terrain in open-air jeeps and excursion vehicles. Call (760) 767-1232 or visit [www.californiaoverland.com](http://www.californiaoverland.com) for more information.

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is California's largest state park and is the largest state park in the contiguous United States with more than 600,000 acres. It extends into three counties: San Diego, Imperial and Riverside. From just above sea level to more than 6,000 feet, the Park has unique and diverse landscapes and environments, and provides habitat for many endangered and rare species including Peninsular bighorn sheep, least Bell's vireo, Borrego bedstraw and Arizona Carlowrightia. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is the first State Park to develop a sister park relationship across the world. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Ikh Nart Nature Reserve in Mongolia were officially recognized as sister parks in September of 2008.

The mission of Anza-Borrego Foundation and Institute is to promote conservation in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the surrounding ecological region through land acquisition, education, interpretation and scientific studies. Anza-Borrego Foundation and Institute (ABFI), founded in 1967, is a non-profit educational organization which believes conservation of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is reached through educating Park visitors and others. Anza-Borrego Foundation operates Anza-Borrego Institute, a field school which provides high quality, in-depth educational courses to over 1,300 visitors each year. In addition, ABFI has a growing member/donor program with approximately 1,400 members. To generate funds to support Park programs and projects, ABFI sells an extensive selection of educational materials to visitors in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park's Visitor Center and at ABFI's website [www.theABF.org](http://www.theABF.org).

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