

Deep Creek Wild & Scenic River

Location:

**San Bernardino National Forest
San Bernardino County District 3
California Congressional District 41**

Status: Eligible for National Wild & Scenic River protection (2005 Forest Plan)

Approximate Length: 22.5 miles

Description

With its source high in the San Bernardino Mountains, Deep Creek flows northward into the Mojave Desert. Fed by Holcomb Creek, its major tributary, Deep Creek surges through rugged rock-ribbed canyons. Its waters tumble and cascade among huge boulders and pause in limpid pools lined with willow, alder, and cottonwood as the stream descends from the high mountains to the desert. The Forest Service considers the scenic quality of the creek to be “unique, diverse, and spectacular.” In addition, the aquifer recharged by Deep Creek as it flows out of the mountains is an important source of drinking water for desert residents.

The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) ascends Deep Creek from the Mojave River confluence and then up Holcomb Creek. It provides some of the most outstanding scenic vistas in the entire San Bernardino Mountains. Several side trails provide access to the PCT. Deep Creek is also a state-designated Wild Trout Stream, with healthy populations of wild rainbow and brown trout prized by anglers seeking a backcountry angling experience. Located adjacent to and flowing into the creek, Deep Creek Hot Springs attracts visitors from throughout the region and is considered by the Forest Service to be an outstanding geological value.

Deep Creek was a major entry point to the San Bernardino Mountains for the Vanyume Serrano Indians who once migrated from the Mojave Desert to the mountains each summer to collect acorns. There are extensive pre-historic occupation, rock art, and food processing sites along the creek, which have exceptional scientific and human-interest value.

The Forest Service identified Deep Creek as an area of “high ecological significance” that provides an important habitat linkage between the desert and mountains. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated the creek as critical habitat for the endangered arroyo toad. The creek also supports native fish species, including the sensitive Arroyo chub and Pacific sculpin. Deep Creek also has a healthy population of wild, non-native rainbow trout. The stream was given and Wild Trout designation by Dept of Fish and Game and has not been stocked in over 30 yrs. In the past it also had a healthy brown trout population but

they do not appear to have survived the series of fires and subsequent debris flows in recent years.

Additional wildlife include nesting golden eagles, California spotted owl, southern rubber boa, mountain lion, black bear, mule deer, and flying squirrel. The surrounding area provides key fawning habitat and is critical to the productivity of the Deer Mountain/Shay Mountain and Cienega deer herds.

The diverse vegetation along the creek ranges from conifers in the higher elevations; with alders, cottonwoods, and willows along much of its length; to sycamores, pinyon, cactus, and chaparral at the lower elevations. The 14 vegetation communities found along the creek, along with the presence of two rare plant species (lemon lily and Humboldt lily), are considered outstanding botanical values by the Forest Service.





FRIENDS
OF THE
RIVER

Deep Creek Proposed Wild & Scenic River Segment

Proposed Designation:

- Wild
- Scenic
- Recreational

Land Ownership:

- United States Forest Service
- U.S. Department of Defense
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Local
- Private Conservation
- Federal

Boundaries:

- Forest Service Administrative Area
- Forest Service Wilderness Area
- County
- City



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