

Off the Beaten Path Hikes

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Petrified Forest National Park



Onyx Bridge

Onyx Bridge is one of many wonderful hikes in Petrified Forest National Park's extensive wilderness. Onyx Bridge is a dramatic example of petrified wood eroding out of the Black Forest Bed within the Chinle Formation. This Triassic conifer tree is one of many preserved logs in the Black Forest. The exposed portion of fossilized log which is Onyx Bridge is approximately 30 ft (9m) long and 210 million years old.

Please respect the visitors who follow you and leave all petrified wood, artifacts, fossils, and natural objects in their place.

This off-trail hike is about 4mi (6.4km) round trip, with 300 ft (91m) elevation change total one way, and averages two hours to complete. GPS coordinates: N35 06.515, W109 47.531 (NAD83).

You are responsible for your own safety!

There is no defined trail to get to/ from Onyx Bridge. As such, use the map on the back of this page as a guide.

The Painted Desert Inn, where you will start this hike, can be seen from many points on this hike and can be used as a visual landmark to find your way back.

Bring sufficient water and snacks; carry at least one gallon (3.7 liters) of water per person per day.

Is there lightning anywhere in the area? If so, do not attempt this hike. Use caution when crossing washes during spring snowmelt and summer monsoon seasons. High water, thick mud, or quicksand may be present.

Based on the exposed and uneven terrain, wear:

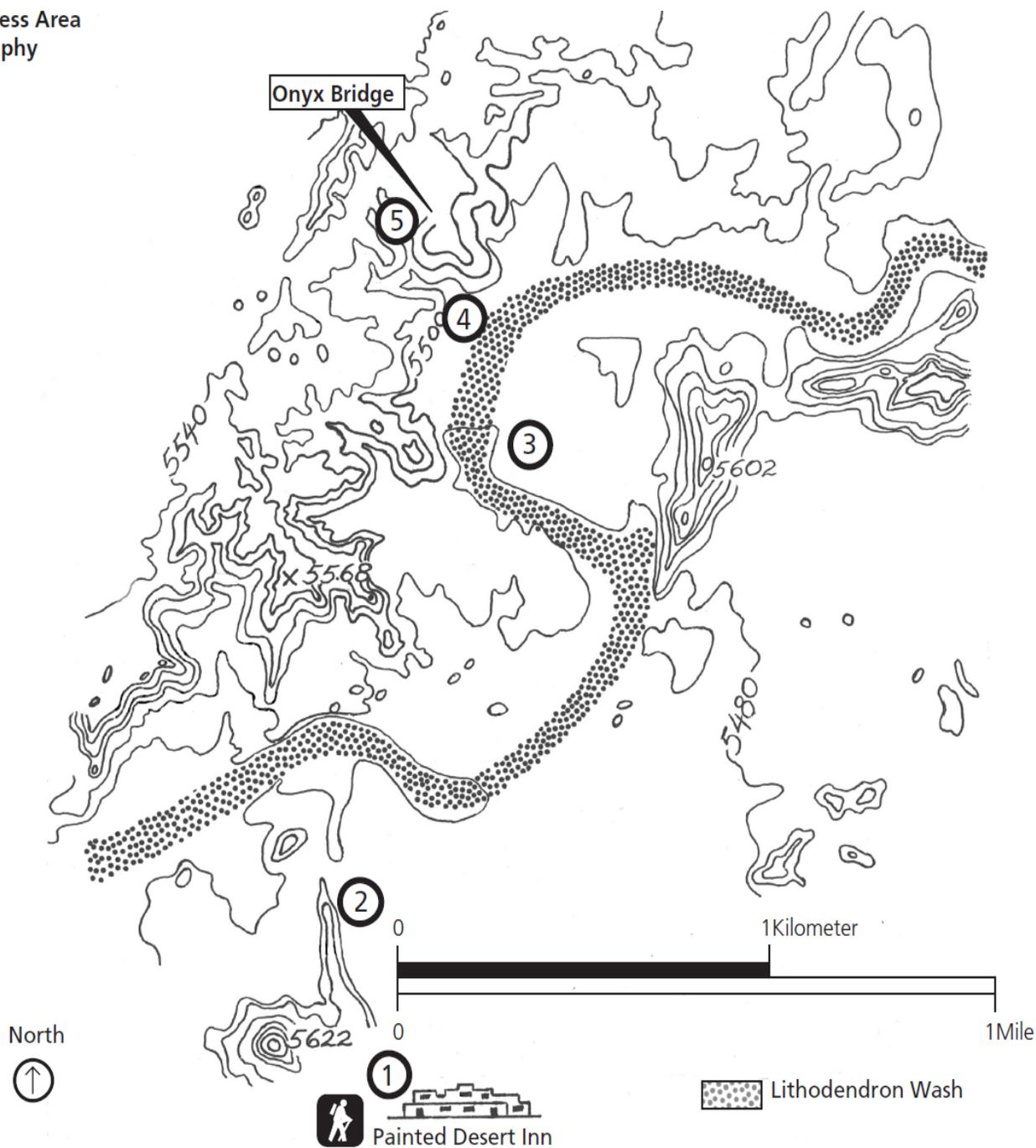
- sunscreen
- sunglasses with UV protection
- a hat
- appropriate hiking footwear with ankle support
- appropriate layered clothing for the season

Follow Leave No Trace™ principles on this and any other hike at Petrified Forest.

Pets are welcome on this hike. Control pets on a leash measuring 6 feet or less, and pick up and properly dispose of all pet waste.

Enjoy your hike safely and protect the park

Wilderness Area
Topography



The following is a suggested route to Onyx Bridge.



Painted Desert Inn

- ① Park at the Painted Desert Inn and start your journey from the Wilderness Access Trail on the left side of the building. The trail has a steep descent with several turns and will be moderately difficult on the return ascent.
- ② Once you reach the bottom, the developed trail ends and opens up into the wilderness.
- ③ Continue north towards the Lithodendron Wash and either cross, or follow it north towards the second bend.
- ④ From the bend, follow a small drainage west until it splits then follow the right side until it splits again and you reach a rock fall.
- ⑤ Climb up the left side of the rock fall. Onyx Bridge is above this and to the right.