



Rincon Valley Area

General Information

In 1991, Congress authorized the purchase of a 4,011 acre expansion along the south boundary of the Rincon Mountain District of Saguaro National Park. These lands preserve scenic areas of the Sonoran Desert as well as a portion of the riparian area along Rincon Creek. Some of the lands within the expansion area remain privately owned and are closed to public use.

To ensure the preservation of this area, Saguaro National Park began developing a formal management plan and expects it to continue over the next few years. If you would like to participate in this planning process, please write to:

Superintendent
Saguaro National Park
3693 South Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, Arizona 85730

Trailhead

The trailhead is located at the north end of Camino Loma Alta. Parking is at the end of the road. An area for horse trailers is available at a wide spot on Camino Loma Alta, just past

Oro Escondido. This parking area is .4 miles from the end of the road and was provided for vehicles with horse trailers due to limited space at the trailhead.

Trails

Two trails are now open. All other lands in this area are closed to travel.

Hope Camp Trail
(5.6 mile round-trip) This trail heads east from the Camino Loma Alta Trailhead and parallels riparian areas. It offers spectacular views of Tanque Verde Ridge and Rincon Peak. This trail passes by two abandoned line camps (closed to entry), with windmills, water towers and storage tanks. The trail ends at Hope Camp.

Ridge View Trail
(1.6 miles round-trip) This trail begins just east of the Camino Loma Alta Trailhead. It climbs to a turnaround with a scenic view of the rocky side canyons of Tanque Verde Ridge and the Rincon Valley.

To Preserve and Protect

Bicycles and motorized vehicles are not allowed in the expansion area.

Pets, vehicles, and use of firearms or other weapons are not permitted.

Hiking and horseback riding off the designated trails is prohibited.

Camping and fires are prohibited in this area of the park.

Please respect private property within and adjacent to the park.

All natural and cultural features in Saguaro National Park are protected. Please leave them undisturbed.

History of the Area

Hundreds of years of human use have left their mark on the Rincon Valley. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the people we now call Hohokam lived in small villages along the floodplain of Rincon Creek. They harvested saguaro fruit, mesquite beans and other wild foods. They hunted for deer and bighorn sheep in the Rincon Mountains, and planted corn, beans and squash in the fertile valley. The Hohokam left many petroglyphs as a mark of their passing.

Hispanic and Anglo settlers wrestled a living from the high desert plains and saguaro forests too. The first of these European settlements were small family farms, but soon large cattle

ranches dominated the area. Well into the 20th century, the dominant ranches were the Rocking K and X-9. The old ranch roads you will walk as trails today once echoed to the shouts of cowboys and the bellowing of cattle. Line camps used for round-ups are now marked by rusting windmills and equipment. Deer Camp to the west and Hope Camp at the east end of the present trail are two such camps.

Today, both ranches are part of the burgeoning suburban development around Tucson. In 1991, Congress authorized purchase of part of each ranch as additions to Saguaro National Park.

The Natural Scene

The Rincon Mountains command the view from the Hope Camp Trail. Geologically distinctive as a metamorphic core complex, these highlands rise above the Catalina Fault at trail level. From west to east, Tanque Verde Peak (7,049'), Mica Mountain (8,666') and Rincon Peak (8,482') cut the skyline. As the only designated wilderness "sky island" in southern Arizona, the Rincons offer an entire mountain range for free-roaming wildlife and freedom-loving visitors.

Within this wilderness mountain range are mammals such as black bear, white-tailed deer, mountain lion and coati along with hundreds of birds, reptiles, insects and amphibian species.

Today, along the Rincon Valley trails, you can explore a superb stand of giant saguaros. The southern exposure and well-drained gravel soils of the foothills are perfect habitat for the largest cactus found in the U.S. After passing the windmill at Deer Camp, look for an example of the bizarre growth form known as a cristate saguaro.

