

at Joshua Tree National Park

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Night Dunes: Camping in the Backcountry

Information

Date/Time: Saturday April 2, 4pm - Sunday April 3, 6pm

Meet At: [Turkey Flats Wilderness Board](#) (click the link for a map to the meeting site)

Instructor: Travis Puglisi

Overview

All experience levels are welcome on this 26-hour excursion to the Pinto Basin Sand Dunes. While not actually dunes at all, but rather a thin layer of sand covering a low-lying ridge, this location is within the Colorado Desert portion of Joshua Tree National Park. If conditions are right there might also be an array of spring flora to observe. The New Moon will have just occurred on April 1, which means that the already superbly dark skies of the Pinto Basin will be in optimal dark sky conditions. Emphasis will be given to best practices when backcountry camping, including but not limited to: meal planning, water management, camp setup, and the minimization of impact on wilderness areas.

Itinerary

April 2, 2022

- 1630: Meet at [Turkey Flats Wilderness Board](#)
 - Introductions
 - Kit Review
 - Safety Check
 - LNT Talk
- 1715: Hike starts
- 1830: Arrive at backcountry camping zone
- 1830-1930: Set Camp
- 1930-2030: Dinner and Settle Into Camp
- 2045-2130: Night Sky Viewing

April 3, 2022

- 0619: Sunrise
- 0700: Breakfast
- 0800-1045: Day Hike A: Explore the Dunes
- 1100-1230: Lunch/Extended Break

- 1230-1530: Day Hike B: Eastern Approach to Pinto Mtn
- 1600-1715: Regroup, Strike Camp, LNT Sweep
- 1800: Back at vehicles

What to Bring to the Course

The 10 Essentials

- 50 liter backpack or larger
- 2 gallons water
- Food for 26 hrs in the backcountry
- Closed-toe hiking shoes-no sandals or equivalent type of footwear
- Long pants
- Clothing layers
- Sun Hat
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Notebook/pencil
- Whistle

Optional Class Materials

- 7.5" USGS Pinto Mtn Quad
- GPS Device / Compass
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Field Guides

Suggested Reading/Listening

- [Geology of Joshua Tree National Park with Tor Lacey](#)
- http://sbcounty.gov/museum/discover/divisions/geo/pdf/GSA_2004_PintoBasin.pdf
- <https://www.nps.gov/jotr/learn/historyculture/pintoculture.htm>

Fitness Requirements

Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

Hike Level

Easy/Moderate, Variable distance based on interests. This should be considered a low-mileage backpacking trip. The maximum achievable distance would be 12.5 miles spread out over the 26hrs, but this is flexible and easily trimmed to suit individual needs.

Guidelines

- You are responsible for your safety
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment
- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them
- Only you know your limits, please let the instructor or Desert Institute Representative know if you do not want to continue. This is a long hike, only go if you are confident of your balance and scrambling skills
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put, and blow your whistle
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out notify the Desert Institute Representative
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative

Instructor Biography

Travis Puglisi is a 20 year resident of the Morongo Basin and the owner/operator of Wandering Mojave Hiking Services. Travis has a cultivated appreciation of desert environments, having lived and worked in Antarctica for 27 months, at UC Riverside's Granite Mountain Desert Research Station as a steward and trail builder, and the Black Rock Desert of Nevada. Travis is a self-taught naturalist with an emphasis on Mojave Desert flora and fauna. His hikes feature a conversational style that makes the landscape accessible and an interpretive manner of route planning that typically combines established trails and cross-country travel.