

DESERT INSTITUTE

at Joshua Tree National Park Association

74485 National Park Dr. Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

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Spring Session
2023

Explore The Golden Bee Mine

Information

Date/ Time: Saturday, March 4th, 7 am – 2 pm
Meet at: Joshua Tree National Park Headquarters, Twentynine Palms
74485 National Park Drive, Twentynine Palms CA 92277
Instructors: Pam Kersey and Tom Scanlan

Overview

What do honeybees have to do with gold mining? Find out the answer on our hike to the site of the Golden Bee Mine, located in the Hexie Mountains in Joshua Tree National Park. This moderate hike is approximately 6 miles out and back with some cross-country hiking required. The last section follows a rocky old mining road with a steep, 800 ft. elevation gain at the end. It's worth the effort if you feel up to the challenge! At the Golden Bee Mine site we'll see the mine entrance, as well as the remains of some equipment, mining camps, and the mine office area. We will learn about the history of the Golden Bee mine, the miners who ran it's operation, and about gold mining and processing as it was typically done in the Golden State.

The area that now comprises Joshua Tree National Park attracted cattle ranchers in the mid 1800's as a place to graze cattle. Mining activity began in the region around the 1870's reaching it's peak during the 1920's and 1930's. Gold was the main objective but quantities of silver, copper, lead and other metals were also mined. A few active claims lingered into the 1970's before mining activity ceased. Approximately 288 mining sites are located within the current park boundaries. Some consist of small exploratory digs while other sites still have extensive shafts, abandoned mining and milling equipment, tanks, concrete, wood and stone structures.

Itinerary

- 7:00am – Meet at 29 Palms Park Headquarters
 - 7:15am – Travel to trailhead parking
 - 7:45am – Introductions, begin hike
 - 11:00am –Lunch break
 - 2:00pm – Class will end back at the trailhead parking area
- *Times are approximate depending on our hiking pace

What to Bring to the Course

- Water
- Food, your lunch and snacks
- Hiking pack
- Hiking shoes/boots
- Warm clothing layers
- Water, 3 liters (there is no water in the park)
- Sun protection: Sunscreen, hat, sunglasses
- Your signed waiver, we will have copies if needed
- Flashlight (your headlamp will do just fine)
- (Optional) hiking poles

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

High: we will be hiking six miles over possibly uneven terrain, and there will be 800 feet of elevation gain, which translates to approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ mile of elevation change—going down can often be just as (if not more) taxing on the body as going up.

Instructor Biography

PAM KERSEY, EdD, MSN, RN besides being an instructor, is a Desert Institute “lead” volunteer an archaeological site steward, and has also volunteered as a camp nurse. She has completed marathon hikes for children’s cancer fundraising. She has camped, backpacked, and hiked for many years and enjoys helping others learn how to safely appreciate camping and hiking. She is retired from a career as a nurse and as a science and math dean.

Tom Scanlan, MBA is a retired educator and telecommunications manager and self-professed history geek. Tom earned a minor in history from San Diego State University. Besides teaching field classes for the Desert Institute he is also a volunteer and an archaeological site steward.

* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participant’s needs; however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.