

Cottonwood Pass Trail

Mt. Whitney Ranger District INYO National Forest



THE COTTONWOOD PASS TRAIL provides access to the Pacific Crest Trail and the northern portion of the Golden Trout Wilderness and Kern Plateau. This area is characterized by rolling terrain with lovely subalpine meadows.

TRAILHEAD LOCATION: Horseshoe Meadow is located 24 miles from Lone Pine. The road is usually open from late May to late October. To reach Horseshoe Meadow Road, turn west on Whitney Portal Road at the traffic signal in the center of Lone Pine. Drive 3.5 miles and turn south (left) on Horseshoe Meadow Road.

TRAILHEAD ELEVATION: 9,900 feet.

HIGHEST ELEVATION: 11,180 feet at Cottonwood Pass.

TRAIL DIFFICULTY: Moderate.

SEASON: Normally, the trail is free of snow from late June to October.

WEATHER: Summer days may be quite warm, but night temperatures often drop to freezing or below. Afternoon thunderstorms are common in summer and fall. Snowstorms may occur at any time.

EQUIPMENT: Raingear, good boots, and warm clothes are essential. Sunglasses, a sunscreen (factor 15 or more), a hat and mosquito repellent are advisable.

WATER: Carry one day's supply of safe water. Giardiasis is a serious problem. Boil or filter all drinking water. Many of the creeks may be dry by mid-summer.

BEARS: Many areas of the Kern Plateau and adjacent Sequoia National Park are as popular with black bears

as they are with people. Carry at least 50 feet of rope to securely hang your food using the COUNTER-BALANCE method. Check at the Ranger Station before starting your trip for current information on bear activity.

TRAILHEAD FACILITIES:

(Wood gathering is prohibited throughout the trailhead area.)

A. PARKING: Hiker and equestrian parking facilities are provided. Follow the road signs. Toilets and piped water available.

B. OVERNIGHT STAGING AREAS - LIMIT ONE NIGHT STAY

1. **EQUESTRIAN** - 10 drive-in sites, tent pads, tables, toilets, piped water, corral & hitch rail at each site (limit 4 head/site). Fee.

2. **KERN PLATEAU HIKER** - 18 walk-in sites. Tent pads with shared table, fire grates, piped water, toilet facilities. Fee.

C. PACK STATION: Service into Cottonwood Lakes Basin, Sequoia Nat'l Park and the Golden Trout Wilderness/Kern Plateau. For more information contact: Dennis Winchester, Cottonwood Pack Station, St.Rt.1, Box 81-A, Independence, CA 93526 or call 619-878-2015.

PLEASE PACK OUT ALL YOUR TRASH

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Write Mt. Whitney Ranger District, P.O. Box 8, Lone Pine, CA 93545 (760) 876-6200.