

Whitney Portal National Recreation Trail



INYO National Forest

The Whitney Portal Trail is a designated National Recreation Trail (NRT) and should not be confused with the strenuous trail up to the summit of Mt. Whitney. There are two trailheads. The lower trailhead is at Lone Pine Campground, off Whitney Portal Road. The upper trailhead is at Whitney Portal near the fishing pond

The trail is approximately 4 miles long. The upper portion is in trees and canyon shade and travels alongside the creek. The lower portion is more open and can be very hot in the summertime.

The elevation at the lower trailhead is 5,640 feet and the upper trailhead is 8,360 feet for a difference of 2,720 feet. For this reason, you may wish to start your trip at the top and arrange for car pickup at the bottom. Early morning travel is best. There are spectacular views of Mt. Whitney to the west, and the Alabama Hills, Owens Valley and the Inyo/White Mountains to the east.

From Whitney Portal Pond, cross the bridge by the restroom. The trailhead is signed. There is a gradual decline along Lone Pine Creek. Rainbow and Brown Trout are present in the stream at this point, along with Eastern Brook Trout further down the trail in the vicinity of Meysan Creek.

The upper trail passes through a rock grotto before reaching Whitney Portal Campground. You will be treated to many interesting rock formations and

Samuel P. Langley and his scientific expedition used it to haul supplies and wood

In 1904 the trail was improved using funds and manpower provided by the citizens of Lone Pine. Five years later, the University of California and the Smithsonian Institute constructed an observation structure on Mt. Whitney.

good views of the stream as it cascades towards the Owens Valley floor and the Los Angeles Aqueduct System.

A wooden bridge takes you into Whitney Portal Campground, a good place to stop if you are looking for an easy walk. The trail continues on the north side of Lone Pine Creek for a short span. Cross the creek at the car bridge and follow the trail along the creek through the campground.

The Meysan Lakes Trail is to the right as you cross the campground road. Continue straight ahead for the NRT.

Leaving the campground/recreation residence area, the hike becomes steeper and more difficult.

The trail drops steeply into the canyon with several short switchbacks. A log bridge provides a crossing at Meysan Creek where it merges with Lone Pine Creek. A good spot for a snack!

The trail climbs a bit after the crossing, but once you reach the mouth of the canyon it is all downhill to Lone Pine Campground. This section is more open and best done early in the morning or when temperatures are cooler.

Portions of the NRT follow one of the original routes to the top of Mt. Whitney from the Owens Valley. In 1881, a crude trail was dug from the mountainside..

Again, the citizens of Lone Pine raised the funds to repair improve the trail.

In 1930 Sequoia National Park and Inyo National Forest completed the current trail. When the Civilian Conservation Corps completed the first road from Lone Pine to Whitney Portal in 1933 the lower sections of trail were abandoned.



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