

Golden Valley

Proposed Wilderness Additions

Size: Approximately 15,400 acres

Management Agency:

Bureau of Land Management,
Ridgecrest Field Office

Location: San Bernardino County. From Los Angeles take I-15 North toward Barstow. Take the US 395 North exit. Continue on US 395 to Red Mountain. Just past Red Mountain, turn right onto Red Mountain-Trona Road. Turn East on the Steam Wells/ Granite Wells.

Maps: BLM Desert Access Guide
Cuddeback Lake.

Photo courtesy of Sam Roberts



Landscape

& History: These beautiful, rugged mesas reach heights of 4,500 to 5,000 feet. From a distance, the picturesque Black Hills appear “painted” due to black rocks that form streaked lines along the hillsides. The valley is flanked by both the Lava and Almond Mountain Ranges.

The historic 20 Mule Team Borax trail crosses through the area. This famous route was established in the 1880s to haul borax from the Harmony Borax Works in Death Valley and the Amargosa works near Shoshone to the trailhead at Mojave. The 20 Mule Teams were legendary for hauling a 30 ton load (2 borax wagons and a 500 gallon water wagon) over 165 miles of desert in 10 days. After just one overnight unloading stop they would return.

Wildlife

& Plants: The lower elevations are Desert Tortoise habitat. Other species include the endangered Mohave ground squirrel and several species of raptors. During wet springs, Golden Valley lives up to its name with a floral carpeting of magnificent Desert sunflowers. Other flowers include the California poppy, Mariposa lily, bluebell and mustard. Joshua trees, creosote bush, cactus, burroweed, and brittlebush are also found.

Threats: Threats include the opportunity for unauthorized ORV use and mining.

Activity

Highlight: The area provides opportunities for primitive car camping. Follow the dirt road east past Blackwater Well and enjoy a scenic loop around the Black Hills. There are numerous undeveloped camping spots with expansive views of desert valleys. High clearance vehicle recommended. Be sure to keep your vehicle on the road, bring all your food and water and pack out your waste. Contact Ridgecrest BLM office for current conditions.

For More Information:

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