

# Great Falls Basin Proposed Wilderness

**Size:** Approximately 7,500 acres

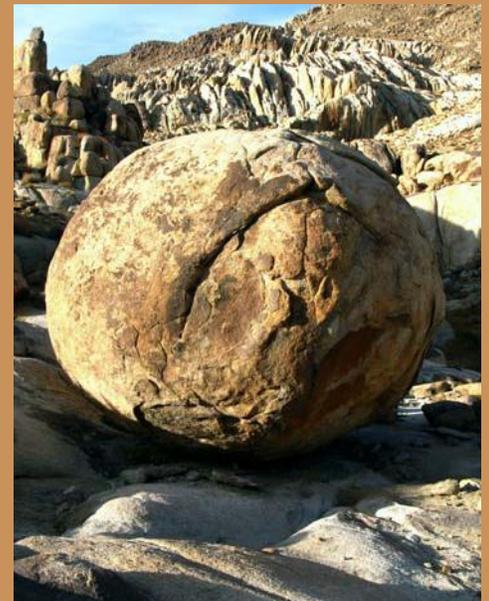
**Management Agency:**

Bureau of Land Management,  
Ridgecrest Field Office

**Location:** Inyo County, Southern Argus Range. From I-15 near Victorville, exit onto US-395 North. Turn northeast on Red Mountain-Trona Road. Turn left on an unmarked dirt road approximately 2.8 miles past the San Bernardino/Inyo County line.

**Maps:** BLM Desert Access Guide  
Ridgecrest.

*Photos courtesy of Tom Budlong*



**Landscape:** The last thing you think about in a desert place is water, but the lucky visitor can often find a refreshing natural “bathtub” filled with fresh water at the foot of the basin. This energizing feature is present here because year-round springs and streams feed the catchment basin. The proposed wilderness boundary is above and beyond the ridgeline, but park at the designated markers for easy access to hiking trails and to enjoy the surrounding cliffs, peaks, and canyon walls. The mountain ranges appear striated because of ancient sedimentation and range in dramatic colors from dusty brown to rich gold. A boy scout troop from the nearby town of Trona maintains a hiking trail up the south side of the canyon and hikers are treated to sweeping views of the ancient Pleistocene strandlines of Searles Lake as well as unique rock formations like the giant bowling ball pictured here.

**Species:** Great Falls Basin includes an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that recognizes the scenic values and the habitat for the Inyo brown towhee, a State-listed rare bird species. There is also historic use by desert bighorn sheep.

**Vegetation:** The higher elevations have yucca, mountain mahogany, and some pinyon pine and juniper.

**Threats:** Threats include the potential for Unauthorized OHV incursions.

**Activity**

**Highlight:** There are 15 prominent rock climbing routes, 9 of which are in the falls area. For those who are interested in river-rock locations, the granite has been carved away by years of hydro pressure leaving the rock arced and smooth for challenging and rewarding climbing. Contact BLM Ridgecrest for up to date conditions.  
Level: Intermediate

**For More Information:**

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