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INYO COUNTY



FIFTH EDITION

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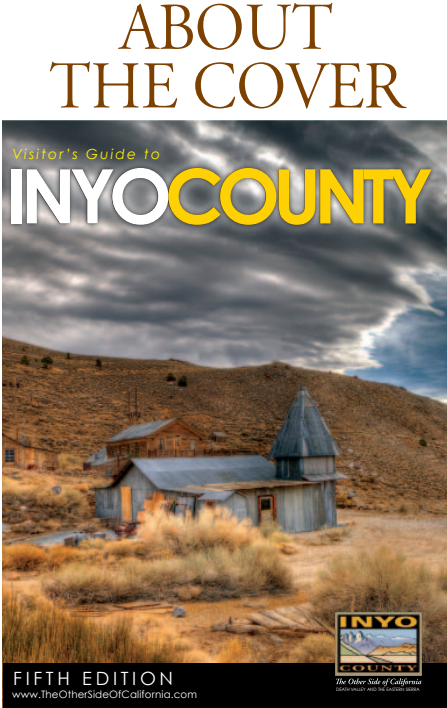
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Our Beautiful Cover of the Cerro Gordo Mining Area in the Inyo Mountains was photographed by Dennis & Kim Dessolier they used a Canon EOS 5D Mark II Camera.

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INYO COUNTY

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CERRO GORDO MINE... THE GEM OF INYO COUNTY

By David Woodruff

Photos by Dennis & Kim Dessolier

Situated high near the summit of a peak in the southern Inyo Mountains at an elevation of 8500' stand a few humble and mostly rundown buildings. These are the modest remains of the glory that was once Cerro Gordo. Pablo Flores discovered this rich vein of silver, lead and zinc while prospecting this lofty land in 1865. It was named Cerro Gordo, meaning "fat hill" in reference to the rich ore deposits.

And rich deposits Cerro Gordo had indeed. The ore proved to

be of extremely high quality. The mines were a great distance from any major town and transportation costs to move the ore was going to be very high. Several unique ideas were born to keep the cost of transportation down.

The silver ore was refined on location making for nearly pure silver being transported from the mountain. Production sometimes outpaced the ability to move it and it was claimed silver ingots would pile up so extensively that miners would build shelters of the

precious bars. At the base of Cerro Gordo stood serene Owens Lake spreading 12 miles across the valley floor. Two steam boats were brought in to transport the



Cerro Gordo Mining Area

valuable silver across the placid lake.

Perhaps due to its remote location, real interest in the Cerro Gordon deposits didn't really take off until 1868 when Mortimer Belshaw, an investor from Los Angeles, arrived upon the scene, partnered with owners of some of the largest mines and built an extensive smelter on the shore of Owens Lake. Bullion production at Cerro Gordo exploded and helped bring prosperity to the growing town of Los Angeles.

Cerro Gordo grew to become the most productive silver mine in California. Several mines were developed and silver and lead mining boomed through the mid 1880s. Sporadic mining continued over the next seventy

Continued on page 4



Cerro Gordo Mining Area



Cerro Gordo Mining Area



Cerro Gordo Mining Area

Continued from page 3
years, but never again reached its former glory. Zinc was mined up until 1957 when the mines closed for good.
But Cerro Gordo was not finished. Several buildings remained and a investors restored a few of them and operated a unique Bed & Breakfast for adventuresome tourists in this airy location during

the 1980s and 90s. The B&B is currently closed but the graded dirt road is still open and passable to most vehicles. The road is overall in good shape, but its open exposure as it climbs the steep mountain is not for the faint of heart. The buildings are on private land so please be respectful of them when you make the trip.



Cerro Gordo Mining Area



Cerro Gordo Mining Area

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RANCHING IN INYO COUNTY

By Sarah Fogarty

Ranching in Inyo County is a family affair that is centered on taking care of livestock and the land that sustains them. Many of the local ranches have three or four generations of family living and working on them, surrounded by some of the most picturesque country in California.
The youngest generation undoubtedly has the most fun as they learn the basics of ranching alongside their parents and grandparents. What could be more exciting to a little kid than

getting to feed 2,000 pound bulls and scratching "Knothead" when he comes up to the truck to steal hay? Then there is playing in the irrigation ditches in the heat of summer, trying to get the cowdog to bring back the plastic boat they are floating in the rapids while Dad is changing the water. Springtime brings checking cows and counting baby calves racing around, tails high in the air like little bumper car flags. It is also always good

hay need to be purchased to get everything fed through the winter? How can we get 10 more years out of the "historic" mechanics shop that has a serious lean to it but only leaks when it rains? Luckily some of these weighty decisions can be thought about on horseback, often early in the morning while watching the sun come out and strike the Sierra Nevada Mountains a brilliant pink.
While ranching isn't really a spectators sport, there are many opportunities for everyone to take a moment and appreciate the lush, irrigated meadows throughout the county, full of cows, calves, ewes and lambs. Where horses are lazing under cottonwood trees and the



to exercise the imagination while walking along cow trails through the brush and grass, making decisions on which path to take when they branch off and deciding if you are going to let a little sister have a turn leading the imaginary cow drive.
The older generations are still having fun but are dealing with more significant issues than imaginary cattle drives. Will there be enough snow in the mountains to have adequate irrigation water? Are all the animals healthy and getting plenty of feed? What can be done to battle invasive weeds that threaten pastures and meadows? How many tons of

smell of fresh cut hay saturates the dry summer air.
Many of the ranches do still drive cattle to summer pastures and travelers may have the opportunity to participate in a modern day cattle drive by stopping to allow cowboys to cross 395 with a herd of cows. The herd may be as small as one cow and calf or as large as five or six hundred head but either way it is a great photo opportunity with a magnificent backdrop!
So stay another day in Inyo County and have a delicious steak or juicy burger at one of the great local restaurants. Get up early to watch a beautiful sunrise and find a nice dry cow pie to dance on!

LET'S SPEND ANOTHER DAY IN LONE PINE

By Chris Langley

Visitors find it difficult to leave Lone Pine after a wonderful stay. So if you stay one more day, you can discover "hidden" Lone Pine. All it takes is for you to have a mildly adventurous spirit.

With one more day, you can take a meal at that restaurant you didn't get to enjoy. Whether it is Seasons, arguably the best restaurant in Inyo County, the Merry-Go-Round with Chinese cuisine, the Bonanza with varied Mexican fare, or one of our cafes: Mt. Whitney, Alabama Hills or Totem, you really can't go wrong. Try a special at the Alabama, an ostrich burger at the Whitney or delicious breakfast at the Totem.

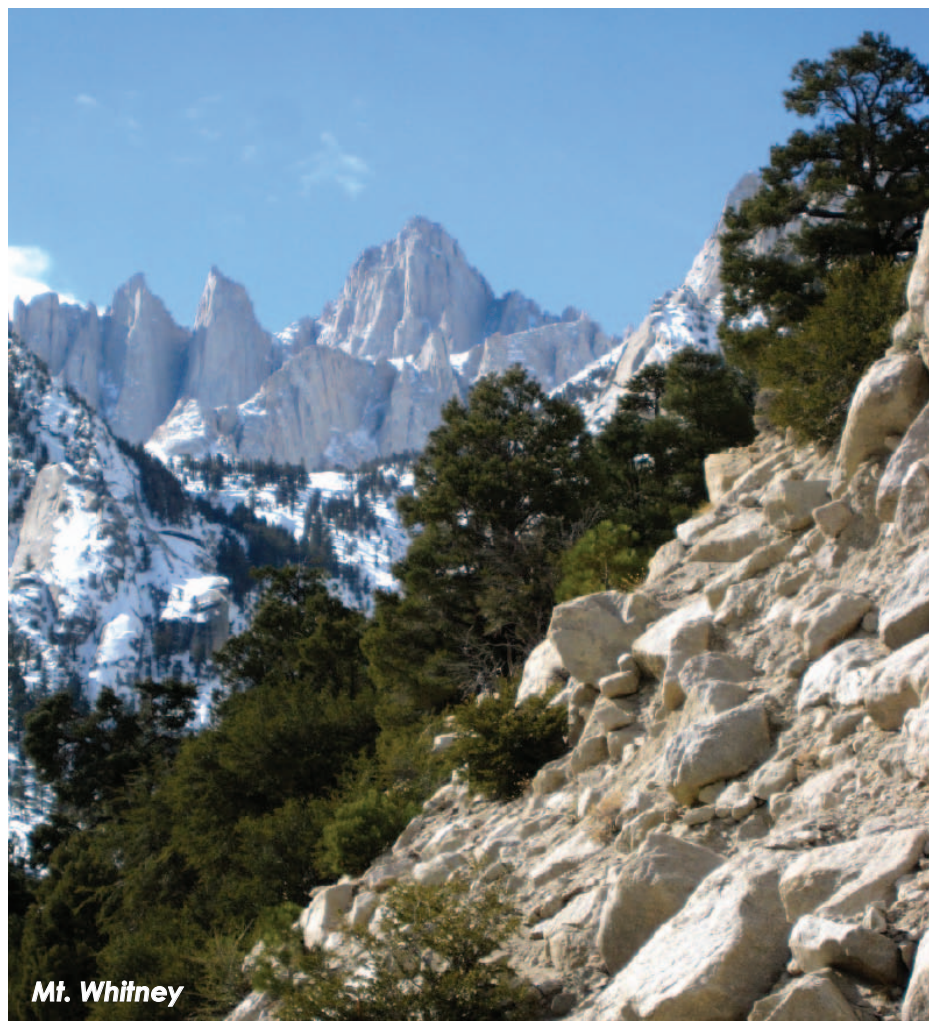
There are the little enclaves to our east. Start on Highway 136 at the Inter Agency Visitors Center. Stop at the vista center that allows you to overlook the Owens Dry Lakebed and the Los Angeles Dust Mitigation Project.

Cerro Gordo is a mining complex at 8300 feet. It is best to

have 4-wheel drive or at least a high clearance SUV. See the old

American Hotel, the Museum or just the fabulous views of Owens Lake and beyond. Best to check conditions before you set out. The road is on your left just past Keeler.

Keeler is about 17 miles from Lone Pine on Highway 136/190. You can see the original railroad



Mt. Whitney



Alabama Hills

station and the ruins of the turntable because Keeler was the southern terminus of the Carson-Colorado Narrow Gauge RR. The old post office, school house and the municipal swimming pool are fun and a challenge for the amateur photographer.

Darwin is about forty miles from Lone Pine on 136/190 and is a very interesting day trip. There are old mining buildings and Main Street, but no services there. Sculptor Gordo Newll had his studio there at one time.

About seven miles north of Lone Pine is the Manzanar National Historic Site with a beautiful interpretive center in old high school gymnasium. This Japanese Internment Camp from World War II now has three replica

buildings and a reconstructed guard tower. There is also one of the original rock gardens under restoration.

Driving back to Lone Pine

Continued on page 8

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Owens Lake

Continued from page 7

you will see Moffatt Ranch Road on your right. Take that Road and you will enter the famous Alabama Hills from a lesser seen direction. Continue south and get on to Movie Road.

By the way, pick up a self-guided tour brochure of the Alabama Hills either at the Film History Museum or the Chamber of Commerce Office and explore this very famous movie location from town. There is also a map to the Mobius Arch, which can be reached after a short hike from the parking lot. A map is available for this also. For bird watchers, pick up an Audubon map. Travel out to the Marsh area



on the Owens Lake created by Cottonwood Creek. There are many water birds there including avocets that are charming.

Lone Pine has four cemeteries, a must visit for history explorers. The Mt. Whitney Cemetery on Highway 395 just north of town has many local residents as well as Gus Marsh, builder of the Mt. Whitney Trail, Felix Meysan, son of the original founder of the Meysan store, located where now the Lone Pine Bistro is. Also buried there is Walter Hopps, famous Los Angeles art patron and curator. The Mass Earthquake Grave is nearly across the street and marks the dead from the 1872 tremor, one of the biggest in American history.

The Pioneer Cemetery, the final resting place of Charles Begole founder of Lone Pine is down Inyo Street, referred by locals as Dump Road. It was once a main thoroughfare to the mines to the east and south. Finally is the Depot Cemetery out Narrow Gauge Road. A tombstone with Cyrillic script marks the final resting place of a man from Sarajevo who died of "not natural causes."

For an extra day trip, drive up to Whitney Portal and from

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spring to late fall dine at the Portal Store and Restaurant. The very big pancake is amazing. The best way to spend an extra day is to kick back and enjoy the quiet atmosphere of small town life, with a good book, and a little doze in the afternoon sun, and coffee at one of our two coffee shops. Enjoy your extra day in Lone Pine.

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LET'S SPEND ANOTHER DAY IN BISHOP

Bishop Chamber of Commerce

The City of Bishop is located at the northern end of Inyo County in the beautiful Owens Valley where Highway 395 meets U.S. Route 6. While Bishop has the largest population and is the only incorporated city in Inyo County, it definitely maintains a friendly home-town atmosphere. Approximately 3,500 people reside within the 1.8 square miles of the city limits and another 5,000 or so live in the greater Bishop Area.

A few years ago, well known author Tom Stienstra surveyed fellow members of the Outdoor Writers Association of California and determined that Bishop is California's #1 City to live for Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts.

"Bishop was No. 1 on most ballots and in the top 10 of most writers taking the survey," writes Stienstra. "They highlighted trout

fishing at lakes and streams, great hiking, horseback riding and exploring near Bishop Pass, backpacking into the John Muir Wilderness, tracking Sierra bighorn sheep and mule deer, and four-season mountain weather, complete with sensational fall colors from aspens, yet without much snow."

"A beautiful small-town atmosphere surrounded by public lands," stated Bill Karr, editor of Western Outdoor News. Columnist and senior research editor Kathie Morgan is quoted as simply remarking, "Breathtaking scenery."

Bishop is a terrific place to call "home" while exploring the Eastern Sierra. Lodging establishments abound, with about 800 rooms ranging from quite luxurious to rustic cabins. Campgrounds operated by USFS,

Inyo County and private owners are also abundant in the area. In Bishop, you'll find great restaurants to suit any taste, including American Fare, Mexican Cuisine, plus Chinese, Thai and Japanese delicacies.

Highway 395 is Bishop's Main Street, featuring several art galleries and unique retail shops. To truly enjoy Bishop, you really must take a side trip off Main Street. Try Line Street (aka Highway 168). To the East on Line Street, you'll cross the Owens River and to the West, you'll find the glorious mountains, lakes and streams of Bishop Creek Canyon. In the summer months, Lake Sabrina, South Lake and North Lake offer world-class trout fishing. In the fall, the Aspens and Cottonwoods turn fiery

Continued on page 12

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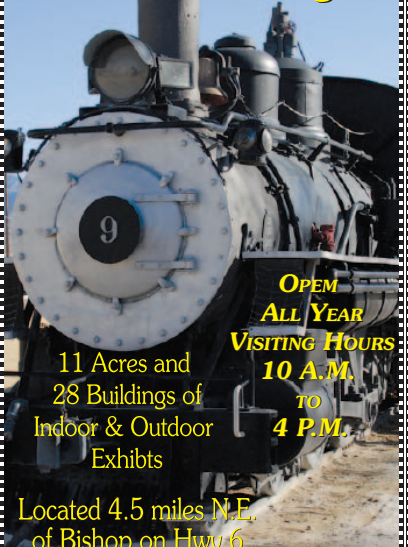


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colors of yellow, orange and red. Photography buffs from around the world visit the canyon in hopes of capturing just a shot or two of the splendor.

In the center of town, be sure to visit the Bishop City Park with several acres of beautifully maintained grass, shade trees and flowers – a great place to picnic! The Bishop City Park features a public swimming pool, skate & bike park, tennis courts, baseball fields, and a picture-perfect duck pond.

The Millpond Recreation Area is just a few miles north-west of town and offers camping, baseball fields, playgrounds and much, much more. Pleasant Valley Reservoir and the Lower Owens River offer fantastic year-

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Lake Sabrina

round trout fishing. The Bishop Country Club is a challenging 18-hole course with breathtaking views, plus full service pro shop, restaurant & bar. If you're feeling lucky, be sure to visit the Paiute Palace Casino, just a few miles north-west of downtown on Highway 395.

Other Bishop "must sees" include Laws Railroad Museum & Historical Site, Downtown Murals, Keough's Hot Springs, and the Buttermilks.

Bishop is home to several big annual events including: Blake Jones Trout Derby (March), Mule Days Celebration (May), California High School Rodeo State Finals Championship (June), Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fair (Labor Day), Millpond Music Festival (September), Fall Colors Car Show (October) and more.

The Bishop Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau is conveniently located at the City Park in the A-frame Building-690 North Main Street. The visitor center is open daily, year-round and staffed by friendly & knowledgeable folks. Whether

you are in the area for just an hour, a day or a week, be sure to stop in for free maps & brochures to help you make the most of your Eastern Sierra adventure. The visitor center also carries a nice selection of local interest

books, postcards, t-shirts, hats & other souvenirs. And, new in 2012, the chamber will offer guided history tours of the Owens Valley on selected dates. Visit online at www.bishopvisitor.com or call 1-760-873-8405.



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MT. WHITNEY FISH HATCHERY

By David Woodruff

Just north of the town of Independence lies a little known treasure that has been amazing the Inyo County visitor and resident alike for over 95 years. A masterpiece of architectural beauty, the Mt Whitney Fish Hatchery stands grandly along the banks of lovely Oak Creek. "Design a building that will match the mountains" instructed then Fish and Game Commissioner J.M. Connell to his engineers in 1916. "One that will last forever and be a showplace for all time."

Great blocks of granite were collected nearby and brought to the construction site to make the two to three foot walls. None of these stones were cut, but were "sorted" to fit. A testimony to the skilled masons that built this magnificent structure. The beautiful hatchery grounds,

were originally landscaped by a gardener brought in from famed Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

When completed, it was the largest hatchery in the state and gained significant importance as the sole producer of golden trout eggs in California. This beautiful fish (the official state fish of California) is a prized by many a Sierra Nevada angler.

The buildings and grounds became an important part of the

community of Independence and the people of the Owens Valley, hosting graduations, weddings, concerts and numerous other functions. The Mt Whitney Fish Hatchery is so important that when state budget cutbacks forced a closure of the historic hatchery in 1996, residents and visitors alike joined together to keep their beloved landmark operating.

Today, The Friends of the Mt Whitney Hatchery and its many loyal members and supporters, maintain the building and the grounds, and operate a fascinating Interpretive Center and Gift Shop, as well as offering tours. The Friends have a trough of trout available to visitors for close viewing in the main



building and a large display pond in front of the Hatchery building that has brood trout swimming peacefully by.

Next time you're in this magical area of Southern Inyo County, take a few hours and visit this special piece of Eastern Sierra history. The Mt Whitney Fish Hatchery...a very special place to include in your visit to the Owens Valley. For more information including hours of operation go to <http://mtwhitneyfishhatchery.org>



EXTEND YOUR INYO STAY AND VISIT MANZANAR

By Patricia Biggs

Photo Patricia Biggs

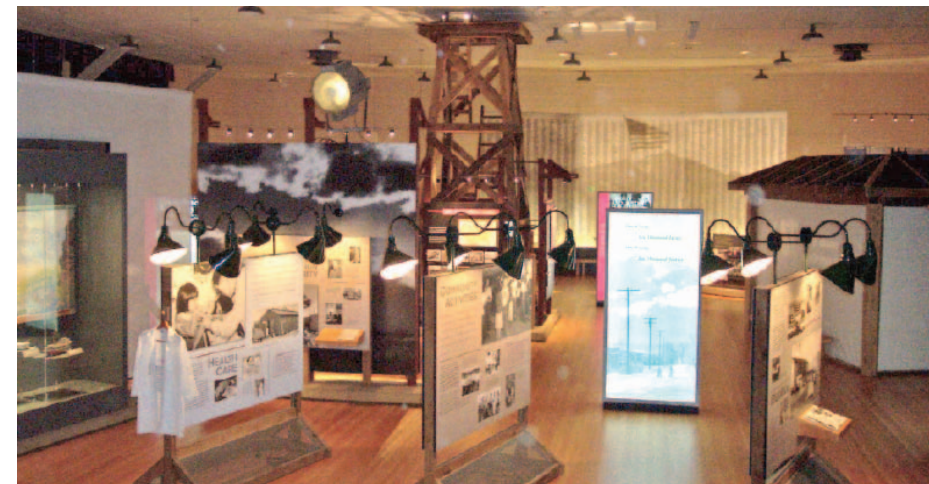
Why extend your Inyo visit for a day to visit Manzanar? This National Historic Site doesn't look like much from the road. Travelers on Hwy 395 about 8 miles north of Lone Pine will see a couple of signs directing them to an expanse of sage and tumbleweeds and an old high school auditorium.

Look closer. During WWII, the U.S. Government built Manzanar War Relocation Center on the site. Within eight months, Manzanar housed over 10,000 people of Japanese ancestry, behind barbed wire and under the watch of armed military police. For the duration of the war, internees married, had children, grieved the deaths of loved ones. They worked, went to school, attended religious services. They reacted to their forced confinement in 10,000 different ways, and their stories are the focal point of the exhibits and reconstructed buildings. But Manzanar also

offers layers of human history from earlier communities – Paiutes, homesteaders, and orchard farmers.

Congress established Manzanar National Historic Site on March 3, 1992. In 2004, the National Park Service opened the Interpretive Center in the high school auditorium, which internees had built in 1944. The IC features a 22-minute award-winning film, Remembering Manzanar, narrated by former internees. Exhibits include a 3-D model of the camp built by former internees; artifacts including the blue star banner that Nawa Munemori hung in her barracks window until her son died fighting in Italy; a room with vintage toys to entertain today's kids; and replicas of the ID tags internees wore on their journey to the camp. The ID tags offer clues directing visitors toward related exhibits – an engaging and educational scavenger hunt.

Outside, the square-mile site



offers a variety of experiences. Reconstructed barracks give a sense of the tight quarters families shared. Within a few minutes' walk is the Mess Hall, a restored WWII-era building constructed at Bishop Air Base and moved to Manzanar in 2002. It is identical to the 36 mess halls that together produced over 28 million meals from 1942 to 1945. Walk through the kitchen, sit at the bench tables, read about the meals people ate and the changes in family dynamics that occurred from communal living. Learn how wartime food rationing created some of the issues behind the Dec. 6, 1942 riot.

To get a deeper sense of Manzanar's human history, walk around the site and view the remnants of camp buildings, rock gardens, and orchards. Experience the serenity of standing near Block 22 Garden on a quiet afternoon. Trees encircle the dry pond that internees dug, lined with concrete, and adorned with rocks. The water and flowers are long gone, but the rocks, concrete, and trees remain. Visit the dojo site and learn about youngsters who practiced judo, or others who preferred kendo. Visit Merritt Park, where people strolled around a lushly landscaped pond, couples lingered under a gazebo, and children played. These relics are evidence of the internees' determination to improve an untenable situation.

Manzanar changed the lives of over 10,000 people. It affected townspeople in Owens Valley and evoked a sense of déjà vu among Paiutes whose ancestors had been forced off the same land. It's a powerful place with layers of history to explore.



Photograph Sponsored by the **Fort Independence Travel Plaza**

Photograph by **Dennis & Kim Dessolier**

LET'S SPEND ANOTHER DAY IN INDEPENDENCE

Independence, the county seat of Inyo County, lies in the heart of the Owens Valley. Often considered the place to drive through to arrive at other great destinations Independence is often overlooked as a destination itself. So how would a person, or family, or group, enjoy Independence for a day? I am glad you asked. Virtual tours have their place. Google earth can assist. But if you are to consider enjoying a day in Independence take it from one who has spent many days enjoying Independence and its immediate environs.

Let's start with the obvious. On Highway 395 which runs through the town there are two beautiful parks, family owned and operated restaurants, and the necessary yet friendly gas stations. The courthouse in the middle of town is itself an historic and beautiful public building. But to immerse oneself in the feel

of the town consider a walking tour. Park at the courthouse and walk directly west to the Eastern California Museum. Along the way note the Pioneer Memorial Methodist church, one of the longest established churches in the Owens Valley. Now that you are on the west side of town enjoy the beautiful trail behind the museum. Consider walking to Dehy Park and enjoy the sounds of Independence Creek. If you have a fishing license, and it is the proper season, Independence Creek is an enjoyable water to fish. It is stocked throughout the season with pan sized trout. Walking toward the courthouse, note the Commander's House on the highway. If historical buildings are of interest, look for the Mary Austin house and the Edwards house on Market Street. On the south east corner of town is a very beautiful and well maintained cemetery, one of the

most scenic cemeteries in the region.

Two miles north of town you probably saw the sign to the Mt Whitney Fish Hatchery. Once damaged by fire and then flood, a dedicated group of volunteers continue to preserve and enhance this historic gem of the Eastern Sierra. Seven miles to the south of Independence look for Manzanar Historical Site. Once an internment camp for Japanese residents during World War II the site now provides an interpretive center and driving tour through an area that once was considered to be world class orchards of pears and apples.

To travel to the end of the road west of Independence is to gain over 5,000 feet of elevation. Onion Valley is considered by many who hike the Pacific Crest Trail to be one of the best places to resupply for the trip from the Mexican to Canadian border. For those who are not as ambitious the route to Onion Valley provides several camp grounds, access to trail heads, and plenty of wide open spaces with spectacular views of the Owens Valley.

To the east of Independence

is a different kind of adventure. Looking for solitude, or want to rock hound? Ever harvested pine nuts, or wanted to see how people lived on small mining claims much of which is now abandoned? This is the place. You will need a good map, or a good local guide. Take plenty of water and travel in a vehicle that is appropriate for the terrain. Above all please respect the land. Take all trash out and stay

only on established roads. For an all day hike consider the strenuous but delightful trip to the Winnedumah Paiute Monument. From there look east. You will see the Saline Valley and on a clear day which is almost always a year round event you can see in the distance the farthest reaches of Inyo County which borders Nevada.

So consider spending a day in Independence. The nights too

are truly majestic. Often Sierra Waves can be seen in the early evening and the stargazing is wonderful. Meteor showers are especially enjoyable. Who knows maybe your day in Independence will lead to an exploration well beyond initial expectations. We certainly hope so. Take it from one who continues to explore the wonders of this glorious small town.



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LET'S SPEND ANOTHER DAY IN DEATH VALLEY

By Christopher Richardson

In 1849, during America's great westward movement, a party of pioneers found themselves stranded in a desolate, unforgiving desert. Upon their rescue, one turned and exclaimed, "Goodbye, Death Valley!"

That exclamation has withstood the test of time: in 1933 the area was officially designated Death Valley National Monument, and in 1994 the Monument was upgraded to a National Park.

Created when a large inland lake dried up thousands of years ago, Death Valley is the lower 48's largest National Park at 3.3 million acres, and welcomes

upwards of one million visitors annually. This remarkable country can be easily enjoyed by those with a sense of adventure or the need to relax and get away from it all.

Death Valley's variety is alluring. Standing guard over the Valley is the 11,049-foot Telescope Peak, a frequently snow-covered mountain just west of Badwater, which, at 282 feet below sea level, is the lowest point in North America. Some winters it snows near the valley floor, while summertime temperatures here regularly reach the 120s. The shifting sand dunes allow little to no growth, while other areas

burst forth with a kaleidoscope of wildflowers. At times they may be hardly noticeable, but an assortment of unique and adaptable creatures make their homes here—even a species of fish, the pupfish, native to Death Valley.

Visitors worldwide have made Death Valley a necessary stop in their desire to experience its rarities — the heat (many visit during the summer), the boundless expanse, the awe-inspiring contrasts, and, something a lot of modern people are unaccustomed to, the peace and quiet.

The film industry has also discovered Death Valley. Movies, commercials and television shows have been filmed here, and even foreign companies make the trip—all taking advantage of the stark, dramatic scenery.

Furnace Creek Ranch



Dante's View



Black Mountains

Resort is a center of activity and a springboard for further exploration. The National Park Service operates an excellent Visitor's Center here, offering gifts, books, an information desk, a downscaled relief map of Death Valley, and a free, short documentary film introducing Death Valley to first-time guests. Also at the Ranch are the enjoyable and informative Borax Museum with its collection of Death Valley artifacts; the original date grove; the antique steam traction engine "Old Dinah"; borax wagons; and more.

From Furnace Creek many of the Valley's natural attractions are conveniently located: nearby Harmony Borax Works, the views from Zabriskie Point and the vivid colors of Artist's Palette, salt-

Continued on page 22

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Continued from page 21
 encrusted Devil's Golf Course, Badwater with its "bad water," Dante's View and, one of the area's most amazing attractions, Marta Becket's Amargosa Opera House, where you can enjoy her extraordinary one-woman show.

Furnace Creek has restaurants, motel rooms, a pool, the world's lowest golf course, an airstrip, and camping and RV facilities.

For those who desire more graceful accommodations, the Furnace Creek Inn provides fine dining, a spring-fed pool and well-appointed rooms.

About 25 miles from Furnace Creek is Stovepipe Wells Village, offering a motel, restaurant, pool, general store with gas, and campground and RV spots.

Nearby, visitors stop to take pictures of the impressive

landscape: large, shifting sand dunes, best photographed in early morning or late evening when shadows enhance proportion and detail. From Stovepipe Wells you may also explore Mosaic Canyon, the Devil's Cornfield, Grotto Canyon, Wildrose Canyon with its old charcoal kilns, Titus Canyon and the ghost town of Leadfield, and the wildflowers and sweeping

vistas of Daylight Pass.

At the north end of Death Valley is Scotty's Castle, a seeming mirage built in the 1920s in the style of Spanish architecture. The famous Death Valley Scotty told many tall tales here. Wealthy Chicago businessman Albert Johnson, who funded construction of the Castle, took a liking to the old "prospector" and his stories, and built him a room of his own where his trademark red neckties still hang. Scotty's Castle is not a "castle" in the usual sense of the word: it simply must be seen to be believed.

Include Death Valley on your Inyo County itinerary: it may surprise and will most certainly delight you.



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LET'S SPEND ANOTHER DAY IN BIG PINE

By Big Pine Entrepreneur Class

During your visit to the Owens Valley, spend a day in Big Pine where you can explore the Bristlecone Pines, and spend time with family, go fishing, camping, hiking, and many other types of fun family activities. We have the oldest tree in the world! Earth's oldest living inhabitant "Methuselah" at 4,767 years, has lived more than a millennium longer than any other tree. Stop at the kiosk by the big

pine tree at the north end of town for directions and details about the Bristlecone Pines.

A fun place for hiking is Glacier Lodge, where they have a great restaurant and phenomenal scenery. Silence is a virtue at Glacier Lodge; it's the first thing you'll hear after taking a deep breath of fresh mountain air, that fresh scent of healthy pine. You can feel the cool breeze through the pine trees and mountainous

valley. Gaze down through the green valley; it goes on forever with its clear blue sky and magnificent scenery. With a thousand acres of wilderness to explore, Big Pine offers many different hiking spots that can be explored during the autumn and summer months. There are numerous hiking spots to explore as well as many camping sites. Camp sites run all along Big Pine and are great for summer vacations.

In the summer, you can always find many things to do: tubing the river, fishing, camping, and hiking. There is great terrain for motorcycles and quads, or go horseback

riding on the trails. One of the most popular things that people like to do is tube the rivers, where you sit in a big inner tube and let the current take you down the river. In Big Pine, there are many different fishing spots to hang out at and enjoy the hot sun. At Klondike Lake, only three miles north of Big Pine on 395, you can swim, jet ski and have a nice summer day.

Located 50 miles from Big Pine are the highest sand dunes in the country, Eureka Dunes, and there you can find many camping and hiking spots.

Another great place to spend

the day would be at the Caltech, "BIGEARS". The New Jersey Institute of Technology is planning to expand operations at the California Institute of Technology Radio Observatory north of Big Pine by adding a new set of radio telescopes. Owens Valley Radio Observatory is located on Leighton Lane in Big Pine and gives tours.

Another interesting place that is exciting to see are the Lava Tubes, which are located southwest of Big Pine. Turn west on Crocker Street and drive up to Glacier Road and then take a left after Bernasconi at the second left

after the cattle guard. They are a hundred and eighty million years old. It's interesting to be able to see the inside of a volcano where once lava had been. Surrounding the volcano are lava rocks that spread throughout the valley.

The town of Big Pine is always refreshingly uplifting with its small town charm, quaint atmosphere, and the local residents are always happy and welcoming. Stop and spend another day in Big Pine while you explore the Owens Valley!



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ECOTOURISM A NATURAL CHOICE

By Susan Sorrels

Ecotourism, as defined by The International Ecotourism Society is "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of the local people". This term is usually associated with exotic destinations in the Outback of Australia or the remote pristine rainforests of Costa Rica. But more and more often the term "ecotourism" is being used for travel to the many natural treasures in the United States where the flora and fauna, the scenic views and the culture of the people are the attractions. Ecotourism usually includes socially responsible travel, personal growth and environmental sustainability. In the last five years the communities of Shoshone and Tecopa, in a partnership with the Amargosa Conservancy, government

agencies and other non-profit organizations, are turning toward ecotourism as the economic engine for the financial, as well as the environmental, sustainability for the area.

For many years Death Valley has been recognized throughout the world as a uniquely beautiful and culturally rich area. In 1933 it was declared a National

Monument and in 1994, as part of the Desert Protection Act, Death Valley was elevated in status to a National Park. One of the many connections the communities in Southern Amargosa have with the communities of Owens Valley, in addition to being located in Inyo County, is that they are both gateway communities to Death Valley. As a result both areas have benefited financially from this relationship. According to a recent study completed by the National Parks Conservation Association visitors to Death Valley in one year alone spent over 44 million in the park and surrounding



Len Warren, Naturalist in Shoshone Wetlands

areas. In Shoshone and Tecopa, as gateway communities, it has become clear that financial sustainability is very much tied to stewarding the natural resources. As a result many of the businesses in the area are embracing ecotourism and have built nature trails, sponsored bird walks and given presentations on the natural beauty and the culture of the area. These activities have enhanced by similar activities by the Amargosa Conservancy.



Saratoga Springs

These efforts have been successful and with increasing visitation the Southern Amargosa is becoming a destination in its own right.

The move toward ecotourism in the Southern Amargosa is enhanced by the fact that the area contains many components of the National Landscape Conservation System, such as eight wilderness areas, the Amargosa River, a Wild and Scenic River, and the Old Spanish Trail. The National Landscape Conservation System was created in 2000 and has been considered one of the most innovative American land systems because it not only protects spectacular natural areas and cultural treasures, it also protects the environment of the western landscape. Its mission is to: "conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific value for the benefit of current and future generations." As a result of these many partnerships, and its breathtaking scenery and rich resources, the Southern Amargosa is taking tourism to a new level.



Tecopa Area of Critical Environmental Concern



Dr. Cowan with NASA Scientists

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AMARGOSA CONSERVANCY

Amargosa Conservancy

The Amargosa Conservancy is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the land, water, and beauty of the Amargosa region. As part of the National Conservation Lands system, the Amargosa is a rare and unique desert river that flows out of Nevada and into California to the east and south of Death Valley National Park. Wholly dependent upon groundwater flow from numerous

springs that feed into it along its course, the Amargosa is home to an extraordinarily high number of endemic plants and animals, as well as several listed endangered species.

In 2009 a 26-mile portion of the river was given federal wild and scenic river status, a designation acknowledging the unique biological, scenic, historic and cultural values of this area. The Amargosa Conservancy is dedicated to helping the various



agencies responsible for the river create a vigorous management plan.

The Conservancy also sponsors fall through spring hikes and community presentations as part of our outreach efforts to educate the public about this unique public resource. We also support the creation of viable and sustainable businesses in our communities that can use the unique nature of the Amargosa country as a positive attraction. These are just a few of our activities; we welcome your participation and support for this most worthwhile organization. For more information please contact us at (760) 852- 4339.





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OWENS VALLEY RADIO OBSERVATORY

By David Woodruff

The natural scenery observed while driving on Highway 395 in the Owens Valley is pretty impressive to say the least. Jagged mountains soar thousands of feet on either side, volcanic flows dot the nearby landscape and ancient granite has been eroded into the most of unusual formations. But when the Owens Valley traveler looks out to the east as they travel just a little north of Big Pine, they'll see a man-made sight that is very impressive in its own right. Several huge satellite dishes rise up from the Owens Valley floor like a monument to modern technology. This is the Owens Valley Radio Observatory (OVRO).

Many people think of radio astronomy as scientists listening intently for vague and faint messages and signals being transmitted from far off solar systems by extra terrestrials. In actuality, radio astronomy is much like optical astronomy in that they are built to detect and magnify images in the cosmos. The image the human eye receives is nothing more than frequencies of light. The eye is very limited in the range of frequencies it can receive and the radio telescopes help scientists observe a multitude of frequencies beyond the capability of the human eye.

OVRA began with the

construction of two 90' diameter radio telescopes in 1958. The Owens Valley site was chosen due to huge mountain ranges on either side helping to block out man-made radio and television waves that could interfere with the OVRO facility. Expanded with the addition of even larger radio telescopes in the 1960s, the facility is run by the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and is one the largest university-operated observatories in the world. Its focus today is primarily on studying the physics of the

sun.

The OVRA facility has recently been joined by a new array of smaller radio telescopes located a few miles to the east at the top of Westgard Pass. The Combined Array for Research in Millimeter-wave Astronomy (CARMA) is an astronomical instrument comprising 23 radio telescopes. These telescopes combine their signals into a single computer to produce extreme high-resolution astronomical images.

Tours of the OVRO facility are usually available the first Monday of the month from November to April and of the CARMA facility also on the first Monday of the month from May to October. You can go their website <http://www.ovro.caltech.edu/> for more information.



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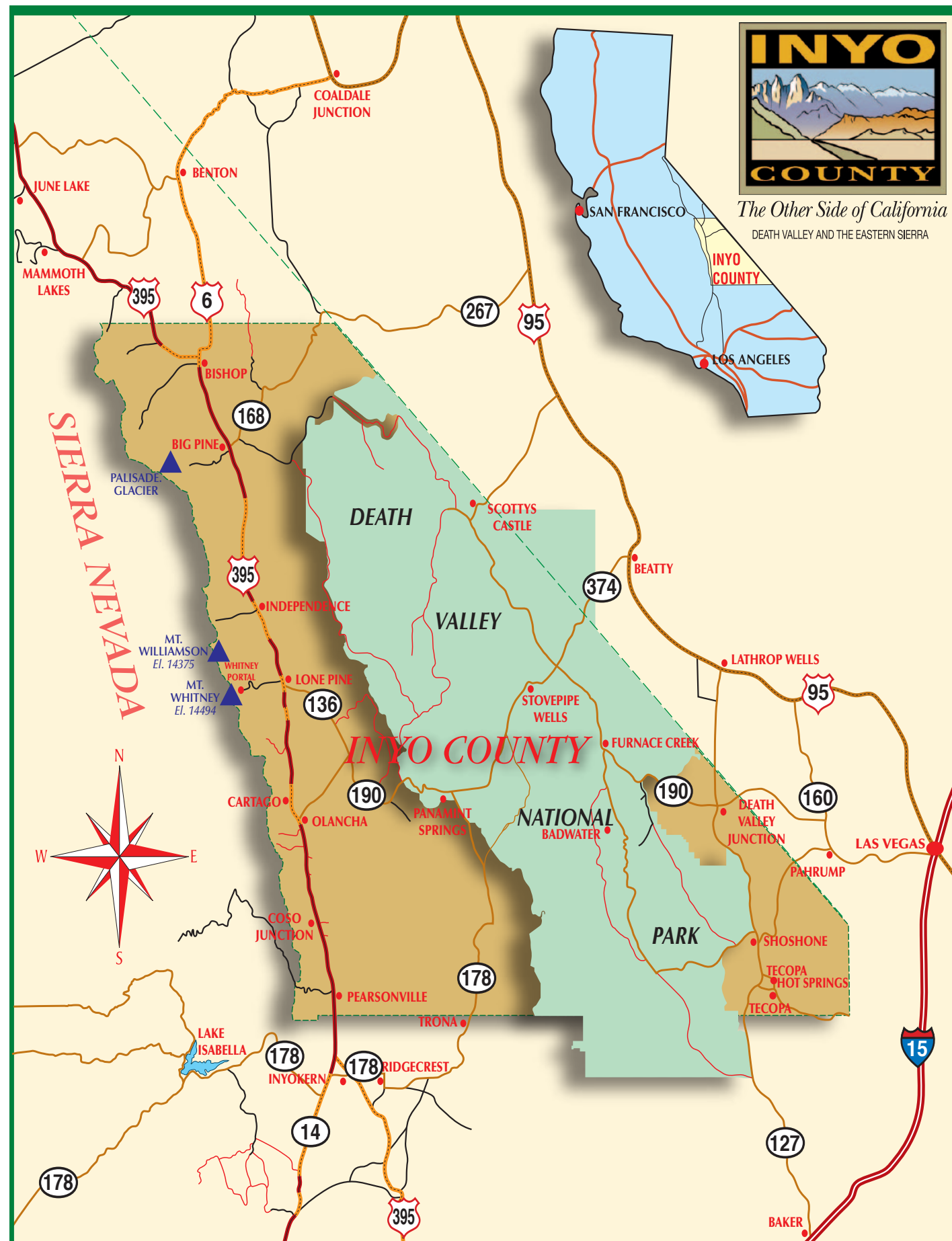


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