

Back County Land Trust - Learning Experiences 2007-2008 SANDAG TransNet EMP Grant

May 23, 2008

Mike Kelly, President
Doug Wescott, Project Manager
San Diego Conservation Resources Network
16666 San Pasqual Valley Road
Escondido, CA 92027-7001

Mike & Doug,

We are wrapping-up our work against a 2007-2008 SANDAG TransNet EMP Grant for the Phase I Protection and Management of Wright's Field in Alpine. We want to share our learning from this experience with others through the SDCRN.

We learned four operational rules during the course of carrying out the work. While these are intuitively obvious, and certainly not novel, it has been instructive for our organization to learn how these concepts work in practice, and to see their efficacy.

1. The first step is to physically protect preserve property from off-road vehicles. This has been accomplished with fencing (that permits wildlife passage and entry by hikers and horse riders) and a fire fighting access gate. Elimination of ORV traffic has eliminated virtually all illegal dumping and damage to sensitive habitats. Hence, clean-up, erosion control, and restoration projects going forward all will have their intended effects.
2. We have coordinated a major donor and outreach campaign to also identify volunteers. A grant from the San Diego Foundation has been used to support an interim development director, who established a data base of all BCLT contacts, supporters, and donors. Initially, after all names and contact information were entered, email and postcard queries were sent out, asking supporters to take an online survey. From the survey results, volunteers were identified with an interest in the physical work entailed in the fence project, trail maintenance, clean-ups, and erosion control. As new contacts and supporters are identified, for instance at recent Earth Day in Balboa Park, they are contacted to take the interest survey, and the list of potential volunteers is updated and expanded.
3. We have found it very valuable, as in all conservation activities, to network and partner with agencies. Hence, an employee of the U.S. Forest Service provided direction in erosion control and trail maintenance during one volunteer work party. And staff from County Parks and Recreation directed volunteers in a one day workshop in trail construction and maintenance, which included one-half day of working on trails in the preserve. The expertise available from staff in government agencies provides guidance for volunteers and is educational for land trust members, which facilitates on-going projects.

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In addition to the foregoing, partnering with San Diego County and being a recipient of its community enhancement grants has been integral to these activities. The grants have permitted us to greatly expand our public outreach regarding education in environmental issues and the beauty and uniqueness of the Backcountry. They have also allowed us to complement our expertise with that of Government agency and private professional biologists and archeologists.

We have also begun to collaborate with the Trails & Conservation Subcommittee of the Alpine Planning Group. This has led to conducted hikes, and the spread to the public of environmental knowledge. We will shortly be publishing with the Trails Subcommittee the first ever brochure of Alpine's riding and hiking trails. The brochure features the Wright's Field Preserve.

4. In order to institute regular surveys, monitoring and patrols of the preserve, as a component of on-going management a docent program has been established to train volunteers about preserve resources. An initial Preserve Monitor Manual with guidelines, observation data sheets, map, etc. has been developed for trained docents to use. Docents will be able to make on-going observations, check the status of sensitive species, and monitor the preserve for potential problems. Over time their reports will help to create a record to guide management activities. At the same time, the docent program will increase public awareness of preserves resources.

This SANDAG project has in part also enabled us to pursue new collaborative and important research and survey activities on the Wright's Field Preserve (such as):

1. Essentially completed
 - a. General archeological survey of Native American village sites
 - b. Specific survey of food processing sites in the Findel Ranch area
 - c. GPS mapping of known sites
2. On-going
 - a. Thornmint pollinator survey
 - b. Hermes copper butterfly surveys
 - c. Searches for the Quino checker-spot butterfly and identification its host plant habitat areas

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3. Initiated
 - a. An Endangered Species Act petition by the Center of Biological Diversity to the US Fish & Wildlife Service to list the Hermes as an endangered specie
 - b. Request to the USFWS to include Wright's Field within the Critical Habitat for the Quino, and if not, to designate the preserve as a recovery area.

I hope that SDCRN members will find our experiences under the SANDAG 2007-2008 TransNet EMP Grant interesting and of value.

Yours truly

George Barnett

George Barnett, President
Back Country Land Trust of San Diego County
P.O. Boc 1148
Alpine, CA 91903
openspaces@bclt.org

Cc: Keith Greer, SANDAG

Attachments:

- i. Preserve Monitor Manual for Docents
- ii. Docent Job Description
- iii. Alpine Trails Brochure

WRIGHT'S FIELD PRESERVE

MONITOR MANUAL

GUIDELINES & OBSERVATION DATASHEETS



Back Country Land Trust

PO Box 1148

Alpine, CA 91903

619. 722.6281

www.bclt.org

Openspaces@bclt.org

Wright's Field Monitor Observation Guidelines:

Purpose:

The purpose of our monitoring or patrol program is to engage docents and volunteers who are interested in protecting and managing our preserve and its resources. Docents and volunteers, acting as additional eyes and ears of BCLT, not only enable us to collect far more data than otherwise possible, they help us manage the preserve more effectively. BCLT wants this job to be safe, rewarding and enjoyable. Monitor as often as you like, as much or as little as you wish. Monitors are NOT there to enforce preserve rules.

Materials:

Monitors should print out a copy of a data observation sheet and a map to record the approximate location of the observation for each planned walk. If you have a GPS device, please enter coordinates on data observation sheet. If possible, please carry a cellphone. If there is a life-threatening or medical emergency, please call 911. Photos are helpful, but not necessary. Please carry water, sunscreen, wear hat and good hiking shoes. It might be helpful to take a clipboard.

Observations:

1. More important than in any damage to the preserve is your safety. To protect that, do not approach or speak to anyone involved in inappropriate activity, but merely record your observations on the observation datasheet and location of damage or incident on your map.

Examples of inappropriate activities to record:

- a. evidence of camping or campfires
 - b. evidence of paintballing
 - c. evidence of hunting, poaching, trapping
 - d. graffiti
 - e. dumping or trash that needs to be picked up
 - f. removal or destruction of plants, animals, stones, structures, fencing or artifacts
 - g. signs of digging, disturbance, clearing brush or moved rocks, new trails
 - h. motorized vehicle tracks
2. Management observations to record:
If you can identify any of the following, please indicate on your datasheet.
 - a. which native plant species are in bloom
 - b. presence of native or non-native plants not previously identified
 - c. mammal, bird, reptile & insect presence and/or activity
 - d. scat of native animals
 - e. animal tracks

Additional helpful observations are:

- f. artifacts (do not remove)
 - g. new erosion areas, burned areas
 - h. dead animals, bones
 - i. nests, burrows
 - j. pooled or standing water
3. Please note any other observation you feel we should know about. Please call the land trust office at 619.772.6420 to report other issues that need immediate attention.

After your walk is completed, mail the datasheet and map to: the Back Country Land Trust, P.O Box 1148, Alpine CA 91903. If you have digital photos, please name them, including date and location number or coordinates– and send to Openspaces@bclt.org. That's it! THANK YOU!!!

WRIGHT'S FIELD OBSERVATION DATA SHEET ver. 5.18.08

Docent/Monitor : _____ Date of Walk
(dd/mm/yy) _____

Time of Walk: _____ to _____

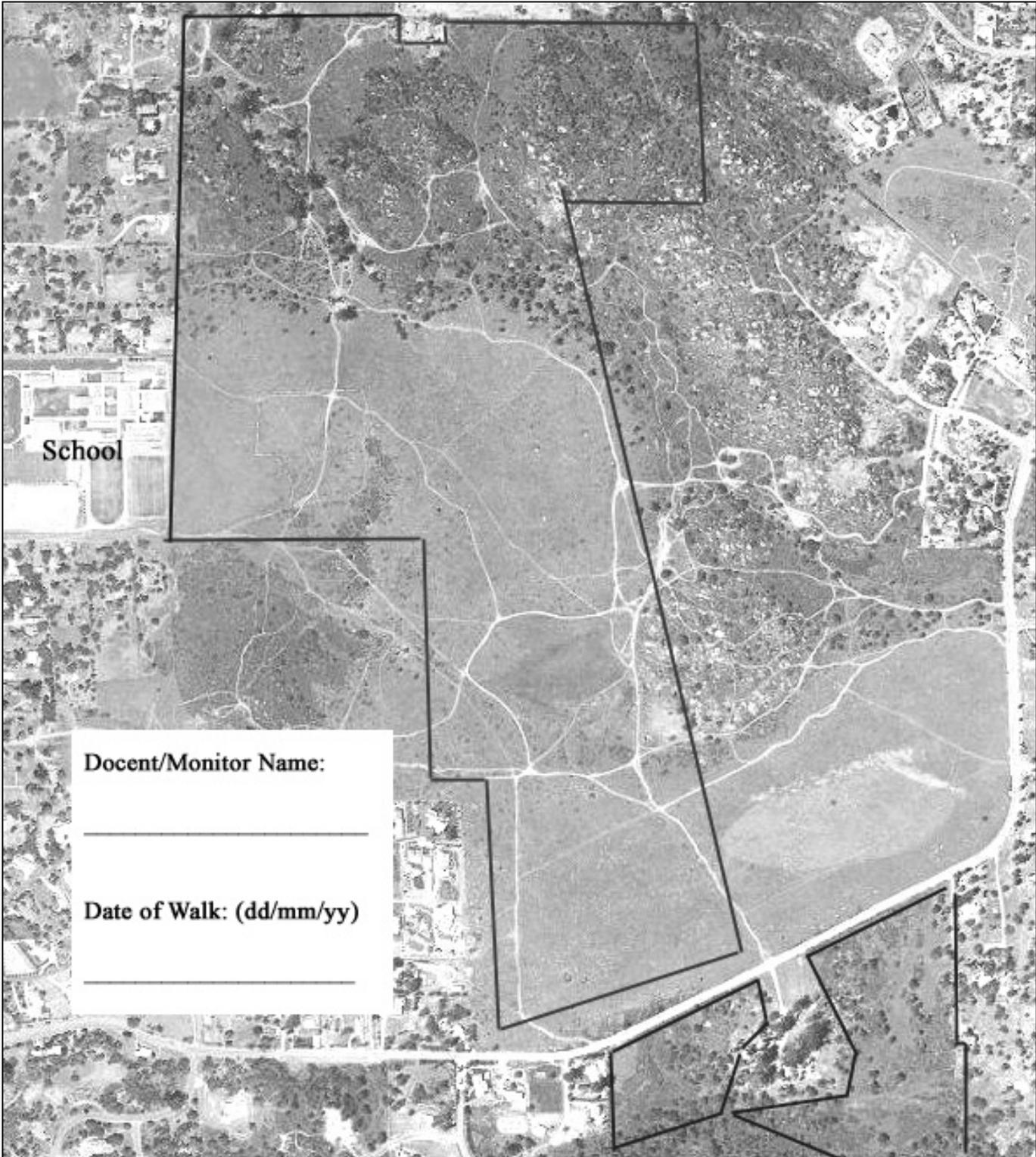
People observed ___ walkers ___ dogwalkers ___ joggers ___ horseback ___ mtn bikers ___ other

Temperature: _____ Weather (circle): overcast/partial clouds/foggy/sunny/drizzly/rainy/stormy/
windy

Doc. Nr.	Observation	Loc. # map or coordinates
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

(continue on back side, if needed)

General Observations:



School

Docent/Monitor Name:

Date of Walk: (dd/mm/yy)



Back Country Land Trust
PO Box 1148
Alpine, CA 9190
619.722.6420

Job Description

JOB TITLE: Back Country Land Trust Docent

START DATE: ASAP

RATIONALE: Docents perform an exceedingly important function for BCLT. They are not only ambassadors for our mission, but they act as roots, bringing in new people to support our efforts and educating them about our resources. Education is the first step towards appreciation. Firsthand appreciation is necessary for financial support for BCLT. Many of our most dedicated donors and volunteers came in as a result of having taken a guided walk of our acquisitions. In addition, docents are the eyes and ears of our preserves, recording observations for management and maintenance purposes.

CLASSIFICATION: Volunteer

REPORTS TO: BCLT Docent Program Manager

PRIMARY DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Lead a minimum of 1 walk on BCLT properties per month
- Commit to scheduled walks.
- Interpret natural, geological and/or cultural resources to preserve/reserve users.
- Fill out Observation Data Sheets
- Convey preserve/reserve rules and regulations to the public in ways that encourage visitors to voluntarily comply with those rules.
- Attend training as required by Docent Program Manager
- Collect contact information from willing walk participants
- Communicate participant interests to Docent Program Manager.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Education:

- High School Diploma

Experience:

- Must have received BCLT docent training to the satisfaction of Docent Program Manager.

Skills:

- Must have e-mail/web access/cellphone

Personal qualities:

- A positive, patient and enthusiastic attitude.
- Loves educating others.
- Ability to work independently and resourcefully in accordance with BCLT docent guidelines.
- Excellent verbal and observational skills.

CONTACT:

- Linda Richards at 619.445.2120 or e-mail at richards12@mindspring.com

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Until filled.

Updated: 5/4/2008

Alpine Trails Brochure

Notes about write-ups:

April 2008

Lengths are roundtrip miles.

Directions all start at Alpine Blvd and Tavern Road intersection (Thomas Guide page 1233; J6). Trails are listed in order of distance from this intersection.

(WF) Wrights Field Trails *Difficulty ** *Length: 1 to 2 miles*

Distance (to trailhead): 1/2 mile

There are a number of unmarked loop trail options on nearly level ground. You can do a loop in the grassland area or head north down an incline for a longer walk through coastal sage and chaparral until you take one of the paths to the right (south) to return to the grasslands. The shortest is 1 mile long and the second nearly doubles the distance.

Directions: From Tavern Road/Alpine Blvd, go 1/2 mile south on Tavern Rd and park in the front parking lot of Joan McQueen Middle School. Trailhead is on the northeast corner of the school and is best reached by walking East down the street (also named Tavern Road) north of the school (Thomas Guide 1234; A6).

(VM) Viejas Mountain Trail *Difficulty: ***** *Length: 3.5 miles*

Distance: 3 miles

This path climbs with nearly every step, and has a total rise of 1000 feet, taking 45 min. to 1 hr for most hikers to reach the top, or you can walk a shorter distance. Any distance provides great views of Alpine and the coast most of the way.

Directions: Go East on Alpine Blvd for 1.5 miles, then turn left (north) onto Victoria Dr (South Grade Rd goes south) for 1 mile, then right on Anderson Truck Trail Rd past the water tower and onto the dirt road for another 1/2 mile. Where the road widens considerably, park on either shoulder of the road. The trailhead, slightly south of the widest part of the road, is on the east side of the road up a small embankment, and is marked by two posts (Thomas Guide 1234; E3).

(RR) Robert's Ranch *Difficulty ** *Length: 2.0 miles*

Distance: 3 miles

Trails throughout both the north and south sections offer winding path through meadows, chaparral and mature oak woodlands, running streams and/or ponds. Horses, hikers and cattle graze in the area.

Directions: There are two access points to Robert's Ranch, one south and one north of Interstate-8. Travel east on I-8 to Japatul Valley Road (Hywy 79). You can go north and park in the Park & Ride and walk across the street, stepping over the gate to access the north end (Thomas Guide 12535; J6). Or go south on Japatul Valley Road for about 0.2 of a mile. Park on either side of the road. The trailhead gate is on the east side and through a pipe gate (Thomas Guide 1235; J7). (The CalTrans maintenance yard is next to the meadow).

(CRHT) California Riding & Hiking Trail *Difficulty* ** *Length: Variable*

Distance: 3.5 miles

Alpine has about 3 miles of the CRHT trail running thru it, though it runs from Mexico to Oregon. The following description takes you from Alpine Blvd south to Japatul Road: The

Viejas Creek Trail is a graded dirt road dropping down to Via Dieguenos (paved street). Walk straight and in about 200 yards, the dirt trail continues to your right, meandering around several Palo Verde Ranch homes. The trail crosses Via Dieguenos between 2728 and 2732 Via Dieguenos, where you'll find a walk bypass to the left of a chain link gate. (See Bell Bluff Trail). The trail then crosses a creek and climbs, and the quieter wilderness begins. The next 2 miles are up and down in elevation, eventually running into Japatul Road (JR). Staying on the north side of JR, head west, where the trail crosses the creek and switch-backs up and back to JR, then heads west. The trail crosses near Loveland Reservoir parking lot. (See Loveland Reservoir trail)
Directions: Go just short of 3 miles east on Alpine Blvd just past East willows Road to Viejas Creek Trail. Turn right and go .6 miles to the end of the road (Thomas Guide 1234; F7).

(LR) Loveland Reservoir

*Difficulty ***

Length: Variable

Distance: 4.5 miles

The main trail goes directly south toward the reservoir. The main trail disappears as you approach the lake because it has receded considerably, but several possible routes go different directions along the slopes. It's best to stick to the higher trails; however, making your own way near the reservoir can be much tougher than two stars with some steep climbing. Another option is the California Riding and Hiking Trail (see CRHT trail) east of the parking area,) which goes either north, crossing Japatul Road and then east along for nice views, or south down to a scenic ravine and then up where it merges into Sequan Truck Trail, a paved road.

Directions: 4.5 miles SE of Tavern Rd. and Alpine Blvd. South on Tavern for nearly 3 miles to end of Tavern, continue E on Japatul Rd for 1.5 miles. Trailhead is on the right (Thomas Guide 1254; C4).

(SC) Sloan Canyon

*Difficulty ***

Length: Variable

Distance: 6.3 miles

This trail offers nice mountain views from this trail, winding down through a canyon to a riparian area of the Sweetwater River. Good bird watching, water, boulders and mountains make for great photography. Go through a pipe gate and left onto the trail (part of the CRHT). After the trail ends, continue further into the Canyon and to the river by turning right onto the dirt road.
Directions: Go south on Tavern Road about 3 miles (road ends), then left onto Japatul Road, and after 0.3 miles turn right onto Sequan Truck Trail. After the pavement ends in 2.8 miles, continue on the dirt road and park at the sharp right turn after about 0.2 mile. Park on the shoulder. The trail begins after hiking about a quarter of a mile in the subdivision (Thomas Guide 1253; A4).

(CEP) Crestridge Ecological Preserve *Difficulty * to ***

Length: Variable

Distance: 6.4 miles

This preserve contains many trail options. At the entrance, go past the shadehouse, visitor kiosk and demo garden. The trail splits in about 50 yards. You can take the right trail for a 1.5 mile loop that goes north uphill past the warden's residence and loops back east along a ridge above Rios Canyon. Or take the left fork and go across a seasonal stream bed and through riparian and Englemann Oak woodlands where you can proceed on the left (more southerly) trail up the 'Lakeview' trail for little less than a mile to the yellow gate that exits the Reserve. Another option is the right (west) trail that follows along the Reserve's edge next to avocado groves.

Directions: From Tavern/Alpine Blvd go 1/10th mile south to Arnold Way, turn right (west) and go 2.2 miles to Harbison Canyon Road. Turn left and go 2.1 miles to Frances Drive (becomes

Mountain View Road). Turn right and continue 1.6 miles to Horsemill Road. Turn right and go to end of road (Thomas Guide 1253; A1) .

(SW) Sweetwater River Trail

Difficulty ***

Length: 7.2 mile loop

Distance: 8.6 miles

This loop trail cuts through the meadow and then heads uphill on the Merigan Fire Road to a pine and oak forest. When you reach a junction at 1.9 miles, cross the river and take the Saddleback Trail to the California Riding and Hiking Trail (CRHT). At 3.1 miles, turn right on the CRHT, then right onto South Boundary Fire Road and another right onto Sweetwater Trail (4.2 miles). At 5 miles you will be back on the Merigan Fire Road. Spring and summer flowers are profuse and there's usually water in the riverbed winter and spring.

Directions: Take I-8 East to Highway 79/Japatul Valley Road, exiting left onto Highway 79. After about 3 miles, turn left onto Viejas Blvd.. After about 1.1 miles, turn right onto Viejas Grade Road. Park on the left (Thomas Guide 1236; A3). Dogs are not allowed.

(BB) Bell Bluff

Difficulty ***

Length: Variable

Distance: 8.8 miles

The hike to the peak of Bell Bluff may be closed because of private property at the top but this trail begins with a creek crossing, and travels up through 35 year old chaparral, offering great views. After about a mile (grove of eucalyptus trees on left) the CRHT trail splits off to the right, while the trail to Bell Bluff veers left.

Directions: Take Alpine Blvd east for 1.5 miles. Turn south on South Grade and turn left on Via Viejas (Entrance to Palo Verde Ranch "The Old Ranch"). Go east on Via Viejas .4 miles to Via Belota. Turn left & go .1 mile to Via Dieguenos. Turn right and go .9 miles to the addresses of 2728 & 2732 Via Dieguenos (south/right side of road) Between the mail boxes is a wide chain link gate and a walkway on the left side of gate (Thomas Guide 1254; B2).

(HC) Horsethief Canyon (Espinosa Trail) *Difficulty* **

Length: 3.2 miles

Distance: 12 miles

The trail goes downhill through chaparral covered hillsides and leads to Pine Valley Creek, boulders, and a small waterfall (spring and winter.)

Directions: Go East on Interstate 8 to Japatul Valley Road (Hwy. 79). Turn right (south) and after about 5 miles turn left onto Lyons Valley Rd. In about 1 mile the trailhead is on the left (mileage marker 16.4). USFS fee area. From the parking lot hike north along a dirt road for about 300 yards to the Espinosa trail marker and go right onto the trail (Thomas Guide 12753; D31).

Under Development

Signature Trail - a pathway along Tavern Road, south of Arnold Way, is the first part of this long-term project.
Crown Hills - a trail on 40 acres of open space, north of Crown Hills subdivision.

Difficulty Levels

* easiest, smooth, and little or no climbing

** slightly rough terrain and/or slight climbing (1 foot rise in 50 feet distance)

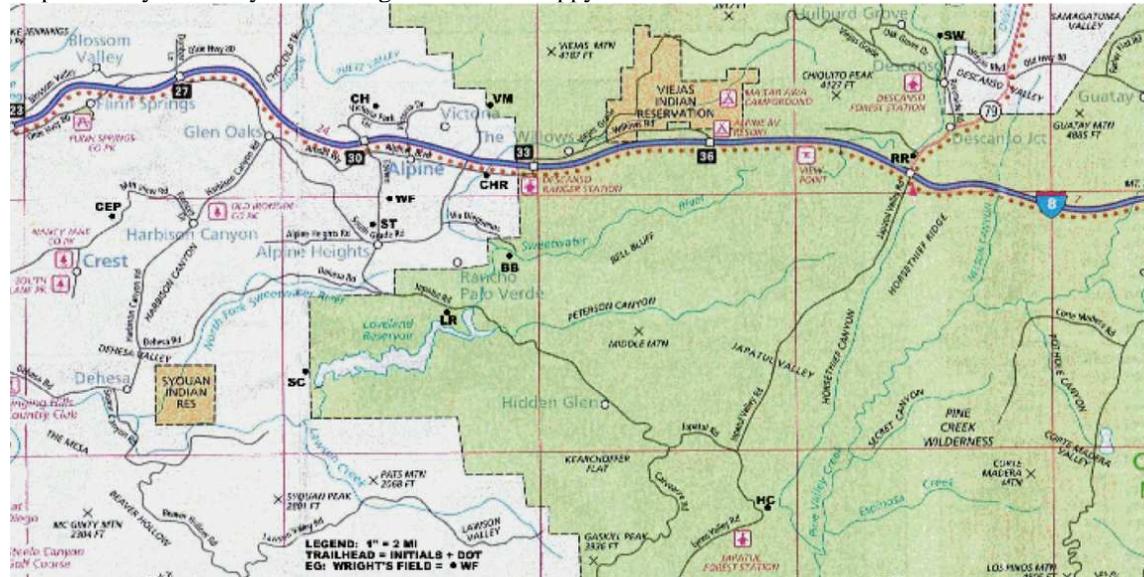
*** moderately rough terrain including some climbing over small boulders and/or rise of 2 to 10 feet in 50 foot distance

**** some climbing over rough terrain and/or elevation rise of more than 10 feet in a 50 foot distance

References and Other Notes;

This Trails Brochure was developed by the Alpine Planning Group Trails Subcommittee to encourage the use and further development of hiking, biking, and horse trails nearest to Alpine for the residents and visitors of Alpine

California. The committee hopes that you enjoy the discovery of the many interesting and little known trails in and around Alpine. Descriptions of some, but not all, of these trails can be found elsewhere, i.e. US Forest Preserve Offices. The committee welcomes comments about this brochure and other trails, not identified here. Bring comments to the APG Trails Sub-Committee P.O. Box (XXXX) Alpine CA 91901. Users assume their own responsibility for safety while using these trails. Happy Trails to You!



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