



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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DESERT ECOLOGY BIKE TOUR

FIELD ADVENTURE / FALL 2023

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Cycling is one of the best ways to experience Joshua Tree National Park. This leisurely ten-mile, semi-loop ride on dirt roads in the picturesque Queen Valley will allow ample opportunity to view the scenery as well as learn about the Mojave Desert. What appears to many casual observers to be a very stark landscape is actually teeming with life. Riders will learn and observe how plants, animals, microorganisms, geology, soils, seasons, weather, climate, and humans interact to form a complex relationship that has shaped the Park's past, present, and future. We will ride on less-traveled dirt roads that can provide a challenge to cyclists not used to riding off-road. All participants must provide their own bicycle and helmet; please review the "special notes" section for acceptable bike styles and rental information.

MEETING LOCATION

[Barker Dam Parking Lot](#) in Joshua Tree National Park approximately 10.5 miles from the west entrance in Joshua Tree.

DATE and TIME

Sunday, December 3rd, 8a to noon

Please arrive on time; we start classes promptly, and in the case of hikes or other classes on the go, we cannot wait for students who arrive late.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: CHALLENGING

The route is approximately 10 miles on unpaved roads that include rocks, sand, hard pack, and washboard sections. Elevation gain is 252 ft with most of the uphill in the first half of the ride without any steep grades. Please contact us if you have questions about your ability to participate.

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Riders must be 16 or older and should be comfortable riding on unpaved, uneven road surfaces

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park (please download or print your park pass ahead of time, or you will have to pay fees at the gate!)
- First aid and emergency supplies for the group
- Leader will carry tire repair kit and tools for limited bike repairs

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Meals
- Lodging
- Transportation
- Bicycle and helmet (see “special notes” section)

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Michael Medina

Michael Medina retired from the Navy in 2022 after serving 30 years as an active and reserve medical officer and 20 years as a natural resource biologist. He is a vector-borne and zoonotic disease epidemiologist-ecologist with experience in pest and vector management, wildlife conflict management, invasive species, and biosecurity. Mike is also an avid and experienced cyclist who spends several days a week cycling in Joshua Tree National Park and the surrounding desert. He retired in Yucca Valley to be near the Park where he began rock climbing in the 1970s, took his now wife on their first date, and has spent much time exploring. Besides cycling, Mike enjoys spending time with his wife, visiting kids and grandkids, volunteering for Desert Institute, traveling, fly fishing, enjoying the art and music of the High Desert, camping, and hiking.

PROGRAM AGENDA

We will begin with a safety briefing and review the morning's game plan. By 8:15a we will begin the ride and make several stops along the route. This may include parking the bikes and exploring an area on foot. Our route is a loop, and participants can expect to return to the Barker Dam parking lot by noon.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Participants must provide their own bicycles and helmets. Bikes will be checked at the meeting location to ensure that they are in good working order and suitable for the ride. **Bicycles must have wide tires to negotiate the sandy and rocky terrain.**

Recommended bikes are multi-speed gravel, mountain, or fat tire bikes. E-bikes are allowed but riders must stay at the same pace as the rest of the group. Fat tire bikes may be reserved and rented from the [Joshua Tree Bike Shop](#) or [Joshua Tree E-bike Rentals](#). Participants must wear a helmet and carry the essentials for all field courses (list provided below.) The instructor will carry supplies and tools to fix flat tires and make minor repairs to all bikes. The leader and sweep will wear safety vests and use warning lights.

There is no cell service in the park! Print or download your park pass ahead of time, and please allow ample travel time to arrive at the meeting location (see FAQ notes about late arrivals.) **All participants must complete the [health questionnaire and liability waiver](#) at least one day ahead of the program start date.**

WHAT TO BRING

The essentials for all field courses

- Water, between 3 and 4 liters per person for a full day outing
- Food and snacks, easily packed and eaten in the field, for the duration of your course
- Close-toed cycling or athletic shoes; no sandals, not even hiking sandals!
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sunscreen; light-colored long-sleeved shirts are recommended and very effective on hot days
- Warm layers for cooler mornings/evenings (it can be surprisingly cold!)
- Backpack to carry food, water, and any personal items you need for the day
- Notebook and pencil are always good to have

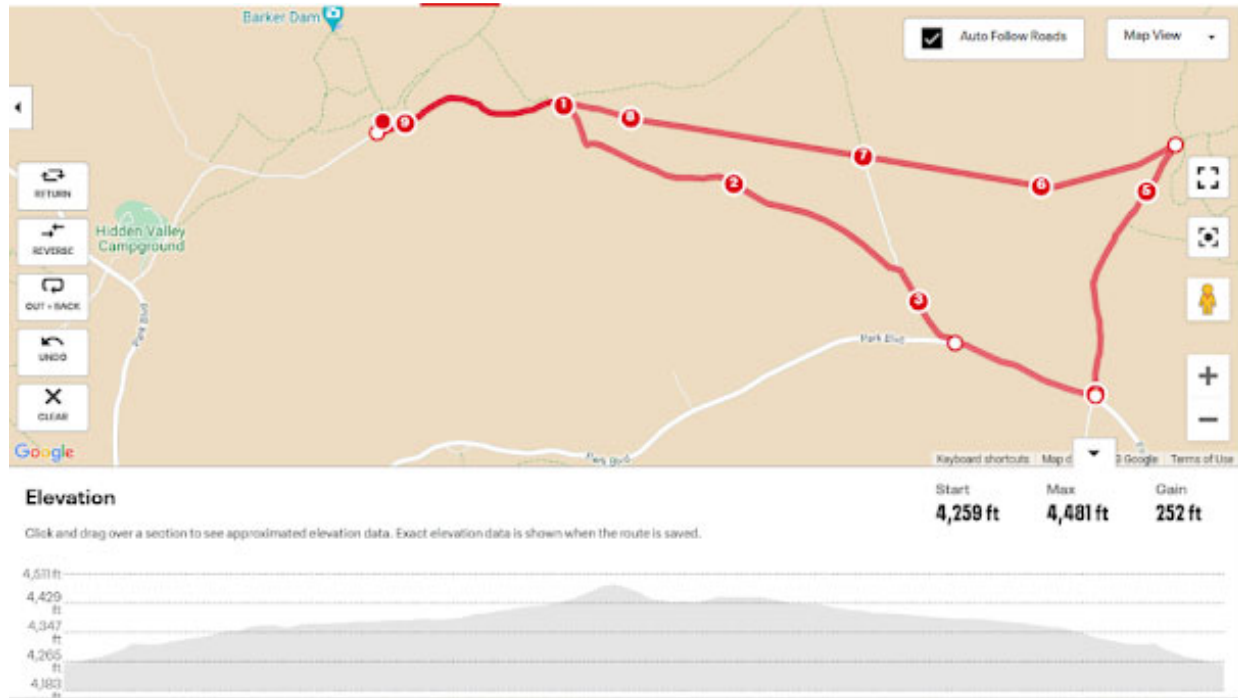
Required equipment

- Multi-speed gravel, mountain, or fat tire bike; see “additional notes” section
- Helmet

Recommended

- Binoculars
- Camera

PLANNED ROUTE and ROUTE PROFILE



FAQ

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Please call our main line: 760-819-4714 and if no one answers, please call the Desert Institute coordinator, Benny Lopez: 949-241-9693.

For classes meeting in the park, please take into consideration the time it will take to go through the entrance gate—on weekends after 9am, you may wait up to 45 minutes! (15-20 minutes is typical.) For afternoon activities, you will also want to allot time to park, as parking lots tend to be congested between 10am and 4p in the busy season. **There is no cell service in the park**, so please plan accordingly!

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified 14 days in advance. If we are notified less than 14 days in advance, we are unable to process refunds for any reason. (But we would like you to notify us if you are unable to attend.)

DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful. If we do not meet our minimum of 4 registered participants for any given activity, we will cancel the activity with 48+ hours notice. We recommend that you purchase travel insurance, as we are unable to reimburse for expenses you incur due to a canceled class, such as airfare and hotel.

ARE THERE ANY THINGS I NEED TO DO TO PREPARE?

All participants must return the completed [health questionnaire and signed waiver](#) before the day of their activity. **Failure to do so will cancel your registration.** If your course enters Joshua Tree National Park, you must **download or print your park pass** ahead of the class, or you will pay the entrance fee at the gate, which is currently \$35 per vehicle.

CAN I BRING MY KIDS? MY SPOUSE? PETS?

Only registered participants may attend Desert Institute activities unless noted in the activity description. If this is a kid-friendly activity, please make sure your child(ren) meets the age requirements. As much as we love our pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.