



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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FOSSILS OF THE MARBLE MOUNTAINS

FIELD CLASS / FALL 2023

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Marble Mountains are a rather small mountain range located in one of the harshest, driest parts of the Mojave Desert, in southeastern California near the towns of Chambless and Cadiz. What makes the Marble Mountains especially attractive to paleontologists is the comparatively rich Cambrian fossil biota, dominated by one of the earliest known groups of arthropods, trilobites. Slather on the sunscreen and join Alessandro for this one-day field class right off historic Route 66 in the middle of the Mojave.

MEETING LOCATION

Roy's Cafe & Gas Station, 87520 National Trails Hwy, Amboy, CA 92304

DATE and TIME

Saturday November 11, 9a to 2pm

Please arrive on time; we start classes promptly, and will caravan to a remote destination about 15 minutes from Roy's and we cannot wait for students who arrive late.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: MODERATE

Participants can expect to walk up to 1 mile over uneven, rocky terrain. Elevation gains are possible.

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

None

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Meals
- Lodging
- Transportation

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Alessandro Grippo, Ph.D., Geological Sciences

Alessandro has done research and taught geology, oceanography, stratigraphy, environmental geology and field classes at Santa Monica College and several California State University campuses. Alessandro has a keen interest for the geology of the American southwest and loves being out there exploring, learning, and sharing his passion for Earth and its history. Alessandro also worked in the oil industry between his M.S. and his Ph.D., was a fellow faculty member at NASA-JPL for one year, and brought his students from Catalina Island to Nevada, from the Salton Sea to northern California. His interests and study, together with his passion for photography took him throughout Europe and the Americas looking for geological features.

PROGRAM AGENDA

We'll meet at Roy's Café and Gas station in Amboy at 9am. We will then caravan to a private property within the Marble Mountain range. We'll start with a brief introduction to the geology of the area, and will set out on a short hike to explore the fossil biota in the area. We will have a brief in-field lunch break, and the class will end by 2p.

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Gas/charging stations are far and few between in the Amboy area; please begin your journey with a full tank/charge. There is little to no cell service in Amboy and the surrounding areas. Please plan ahead and check traffic conditions/road closures in the area the day before if you are driving from LA. **All participants must complete the [health questionnaire and liability waiver](#) 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 athletic shoes or hiking boots; 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

Recommended equipment

- Compass/GPS device
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Field guides

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.