



DESERT INSTITUTE
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL
PARK ASSOCIATION

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55922 Twentynine Palms Highway,
Yucca Valley, 92284

DESERT ECOLOGY BIKE TOUR

FIELD ADVENTURE / SPRING 2024 / INSTRUCTOR: MIKE MEDINA

SUNDAY, APRIL 21ST, 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Cycling is one of the best ways to experience Joshua Tree National Park. This leisurely eleven-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. **Recommended bikes** are multi-speed gravel, mountain, or fat tire bikes with a minimum of 1.5 inch (38 mm) knobby tires.

PROGRAM AGENDA

We will begin with a safety briefing and review the morning's game plan. By 8:15am 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 1pm.

MEETING LOCATION

[Barker Dam Parking Lot](#) in Joshua Tree National Park approximately 10.5 miles from the west entrance in Joshua Tree (approximately "13.2" miles from the west entrance to Joshua Tree National Park)

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.

REQUIRED PREPARATION

Waiver: All participants must complete the [participation waiver](#) at least 24 hours before a class begins. *Failure to do so may forfeit your right to participate.*

Park Pass (\$30 per vehicle, \$15 per bike): For classes inside Joshua Tree National Park, participants are now required to purchase a [park pass](#). You can purchase a park pass [online](#), or pay at a park entrance. If you have an existing pass, you may use that!

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Challenging The route is approximately 11 miles on unpaved roads that include rocks, sand, hard pack, and washboard sections. Elevation gain is 404 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.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- First aid and emergency supplies for the group
- Leader will carry tire repair kit and tools for limited bike repairs

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Admission to Joshua Tree National Park
- Meals, Lodging, or Transportation
- Bicycle and helmet (see “special notes” section)

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 (please leave no trace)
- 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

Required for this course:

- Riders must be 16+ or older and should be comfortable riding on unpaved, uneven road surfaces
- Multi-speed gravel, mountain, or fat tire bike; see “additional notes” section
- Helmet

Recommended for this course:

- Binoculars
- Camera

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTOR

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, rock climbing, traveling, fly fishing, enjoying the art and music of the High Desert, camping, and hiking.

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 with a minimum of 1.5 inch (38 mm) knobby tires.** 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! 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.**



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FAQ+ _

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM RUNNING LATE?

Desert Institute Manager Benny Erdahl: **949-241-9693**
or Education Director Dr. Justin Lenzi: **760-819-4714**

For classes meeting inside the park, it can take up to 45 minutes to go through an entrance gate on weekends after 9am (though 15-20 minutes is typical). Please 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***, please plan accordingly.

WHAT IF I NEED TO CANCEL?

Desert Institute will provide a full refund if we are notified more than 14 days in advance. We are unable to process refunds for *any* cancellations less than 14 days in advance.

DOES DESERT INSTITUTE CANCEL ACTIVITIES FOR WEATHER OR LOW ENROLLMENT?

If we do not meet our minimum of 6 registered participants for any given activity, we will likely cancel the activity with at least 48+ hours notice.

Desert Institute runs classes rain or shine, with the exception of astrophotography classes, which require mostly clear skies in order to be successful.

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.

WHAT IF I FORGOT SOMETHING I NEED?

Our visitor centers and park stores are stocked with amazing essentials for your adventure. Preview or purchase items from our [online shop](#); we carry [hats](#), [shirts](#), bandanas, water bottles, notebooks, [maps](#), [books](#). And more!

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) are registered and meet the age requirements.

As much as we love pets, we don't allow them in the field with any of our activities.

