

Bradshaw Trail

Bradshaw Trail was established in 1862 as an overland stage and wagon route beginning in San Bernardino and ending in La Paz, AZ which is now known as Ehrenburg, AZ.

The modern incarnation of the trail runs from the East side of the Salton Sea to Hwy 78, near the Colorado River and about 15 miles from Blythe, CA. In all, the trail runs about 65 miles through uncivilized back country.

History

William Bradshaw was an entrepreneur looking for a way to make some money off the gold strikes AZ established a river ferry on the Colorado River and charged people and livestock for crossing.

Explored area with indians and mapped the springs. The original Bradshaw Trail connected the springs to establish the trail route.

Between 1862 and 1877 the trail was used to transport miners and passengers to the gold fields at La Paz.

In modern times, the trail is a graded dirt road maintained by the county.

The trail runs approximately East/West and passes mostly over BLM land between the Chuckwalla Mountains and the Chocolate Mountains.

The south edge of the trail is boundary for the Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range which is in active use. You can see some of the old bomb casings that have been gathered up and put alongside the trail.

Starting from the West, the BLM trailhead is now located near the Coachella Canal at Siphon #24. The first part of the trail will take you to Salt Creek, a very broad wash area with some very nice scenery.

Eagle Mountain Railroad history. RR now defunct, supported Kaiser Steel in Fontana during the war and into the 1960's.

Open camping areas in Salt Creek area.

Turn from Salt Creek to Bradshaw Trail is marked and near Red Bluffs (?) and is very near the trailhead for Red Canyon Trail, listed in many guidebooks.

Along the trail, there are several 'cherry stem' trails branching off the Bradshaw Trail going north toward I-10

-- four side trails (Government Pass, Graham Pass, Augustine Pass, Dupont Road) that you'll pass along the Bradshaw. Augustine Pass and Government Road are the most interesting.

Near the eastern end of the Bradshaw Trail is Wiley's Well. This area is known worldwide as a rich area for rock hounds. Fire Agate, Chalcedony, Geodes, fossilized sponge, etc are all available. It is legal to dig by hand in the area as long as you fill in your holes.

Long Term Visitor Area near Wiley's Well and Coon Hollow with fee camping from mid-Sep to mid-April. Areas near Milpitas Wash are open BLM camping areas.

Some notes about the Trailhead:

In the last several years, people have reported getting ticketed when using the documented access trail to the Bradshaw Trailhead that runs along the Coachella Canal. The guide books will tell you to take Hwy 111 to Parkview Road and go east to the canal from the Salton Sea Recreation Area. The access road runs along the canal on CMWD land, which is restricted.

Better (and unrestricted access) is available from Hwy 111is to take Range Road from near Bombay Beach to the old service road that runs outside the canal access. Turn north when you come to the canal and look for the Bradshaw Trail signpost at Siphon #24 (?).

A bonus for the Range Road access route is a large Oasis with year-round running water and about a hundred mature palm trees.

Be careful in the winter, Range Road runs through the Salton Sea sink area and can be very muddy after a heavy rain.

Book: "Gold Road to La Paz" by Delmer G. Ross

=====

Desert Magazine:

Jan 1947

Jul 1955

Jul 1977