

Children's Discovery Trail Guide Lost Creek



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area
Las Vegas Field Office * Nevada



Children's Discovery Trail Guide - Lost Creek

Thank you for spending time learning and observing some of the secrets of Red Rock Canyon Conservation Area has to offer.

Feel free to talk to a ranger if you have questions.

Please follow the following "*Leave No Trace*" principles during your visit:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel on durable surfaces: stay on designated trails
- Pack it in; Pack it out: pick up all spilled foods
- Leave what you find: leave plants, rocks, and artifacts for others to enjoy
- Protect and Conserve water resources and riparian corridors
- Respect Wildlife: Leave all wildlife here
- Respect Other Visitors: The quieter you are the more wildlife you will see and hear



Original text and editing by Geoff Gross and Becky Bell.

Text revisions by Carol Ward.

Illustrations and maps by Diane Colcord.

Children's Discovery Trail Guide - Lost Creek

A natural resource education guide for school children.

The purpose of this guide is to orient students and teachers to the natural area found in Lost Creek Canyon. Information about flash flooding, shrub and tree identification, uses of plants, early Native American Lifestyles, natural springs and resource sensitivity is included.

More in-depth information on all these subjects is available from naturalists at the Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center. Visitor Center hours are 8:00 am to 4:00 pm daily during the Winter (November through March) and 8:00 am to 4:30 pm daily during the Summer (April through October). If you choose to visit the Center with your class, please phone ahead at (702) 515-5350.

Safety, Desert Conservation and Ethics

Desert Safety

While examining plants and rocks, be aware that these may be the homes of small animals. Lift rocks from the far side so scorpions and spiders are not able to sting or bite you. Never put your hands where you cannot see first - especially in the shade. Snakes prefer shade to keep cool.

Desert Conservation and Ethics

Do not collect plants, flowers or rocks because others will be using this same trail in order to learn about Red Rock Canyon. They will want to see the same natural objects that you used to learn about the area.

Do not write on rock walls. Leave their natural beauty for others to enjoy.



Introduction

Welcome to the Children's Discovery Trail
at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.

You are about to set out on a hike, exploring with your senses. You will see, listen to, and feel a few of the secrets Lost Creek has to offer.

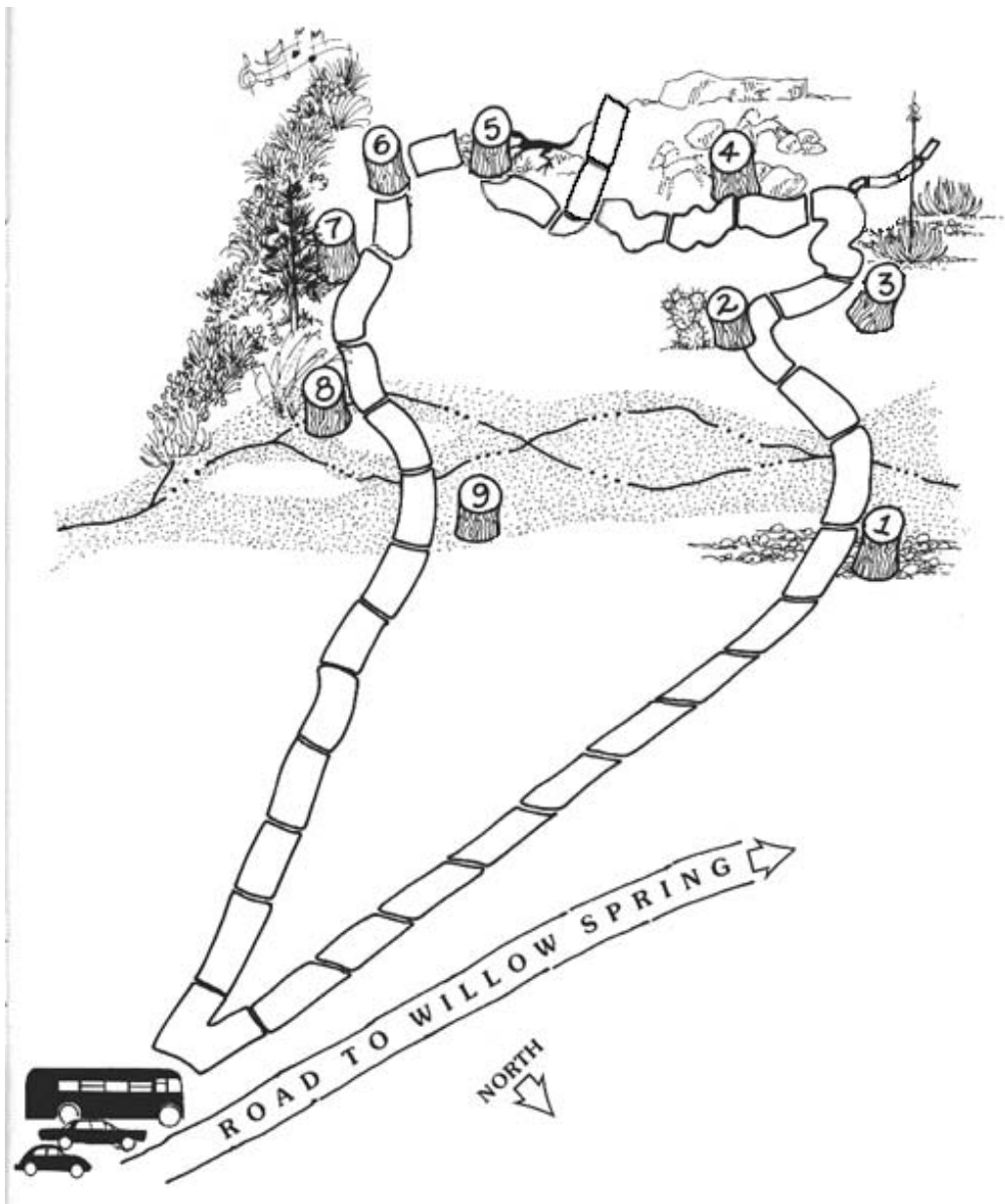
You will hike a half-mile, climb up and down several hills, cross a stream, and scramble over several large sandstone rocks.

Please walk with care!

Carry water and dress according to the weather. Temperatures may range from 35 degrees F in February to 110 degrees F in July.

Go slowly along the trail. Watch your step. Enjoy all there is to experience.

Each page of this guide is keyed to a numbered post along the trail. We hope this booklet will help you to become aware of some of the many natural features that exist in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area.



Stop 1: Wash Out

Look to your right and left. What do you see?

When it rains, where do you think the water goes?

Look in front of you. How do you think all the large boulders got to where they are?

Flash floods are one of the many dangers in a desert environment. When it rains, all the water is not absorbed into the ground. The desert floor is hard, and the water rapidly runs off. Running water is the greatest erosional force in the desert. Yet the desert receives less than ten inches of rain a year. Do you think there are lots of floods here?

Where do you think flash floods are most likely to occur? How can you avoid being caught in flash floods?



RED ROCK WASH

Stop 2: Naturalizing

As you leave the wash and enter the vegetated area, see if you can locate and identify a cactus, a shrub and two trees by using the descriptions and drawings found on this page.

Put a check in the box by each one that you find.

Desert Manzanita

a medium sized shrub, leaves are bluish gray, bark is red, berries look like small apples.



Old Man Prickly Pear

a cactus, the needles are white, just like an old man's beard.



Pinyon Pine

a tree, the needles are one inch long and single. The seeds inside the pine cones taste great when roasted. The Paiute Indians cooked them in roasting pits.



Utah Juniper

a tree, has scale-like, light green foliage. The bark is gray in color and looks like it is peeling. The cones are round, small, and have a waxy covering. If you look closely up in the tree, you will see a yellow-green parasite called dwarf mistletoe.



Where do you think flash floods are most likely to occur? How can you avoid being caught in flash floods?

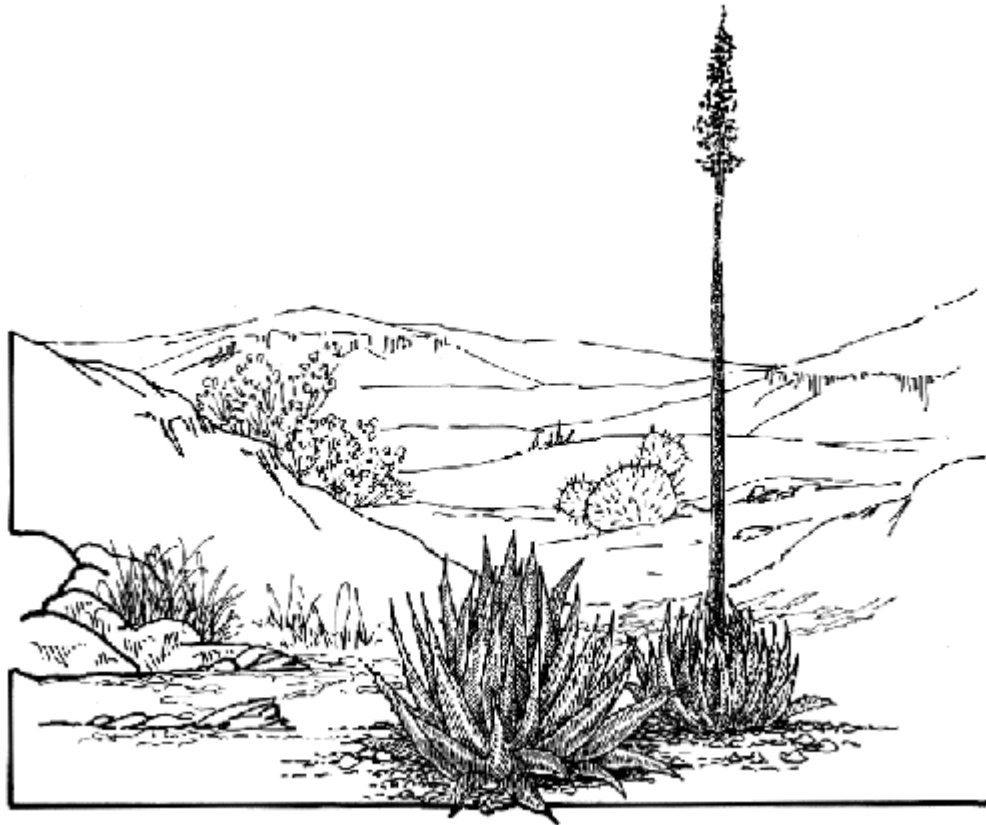
Post Number 3: Wild Food Find

To your right, a trail leads to Willow Spring. Several hundred years ago, Paiute Indians walked the same trail in search of the agave plant. This plant served as a major source of food. They ate the agave, much like we eat an artichoke, after roasting it.

Study the picture of the agave plant. Watch carefully for this plant along the trail on the way to Post Number 4.

Caution! Be careful when you find an agave. The leaves of the plant are sharp and can cut your fingers or hand.

Did you find the agave? _____



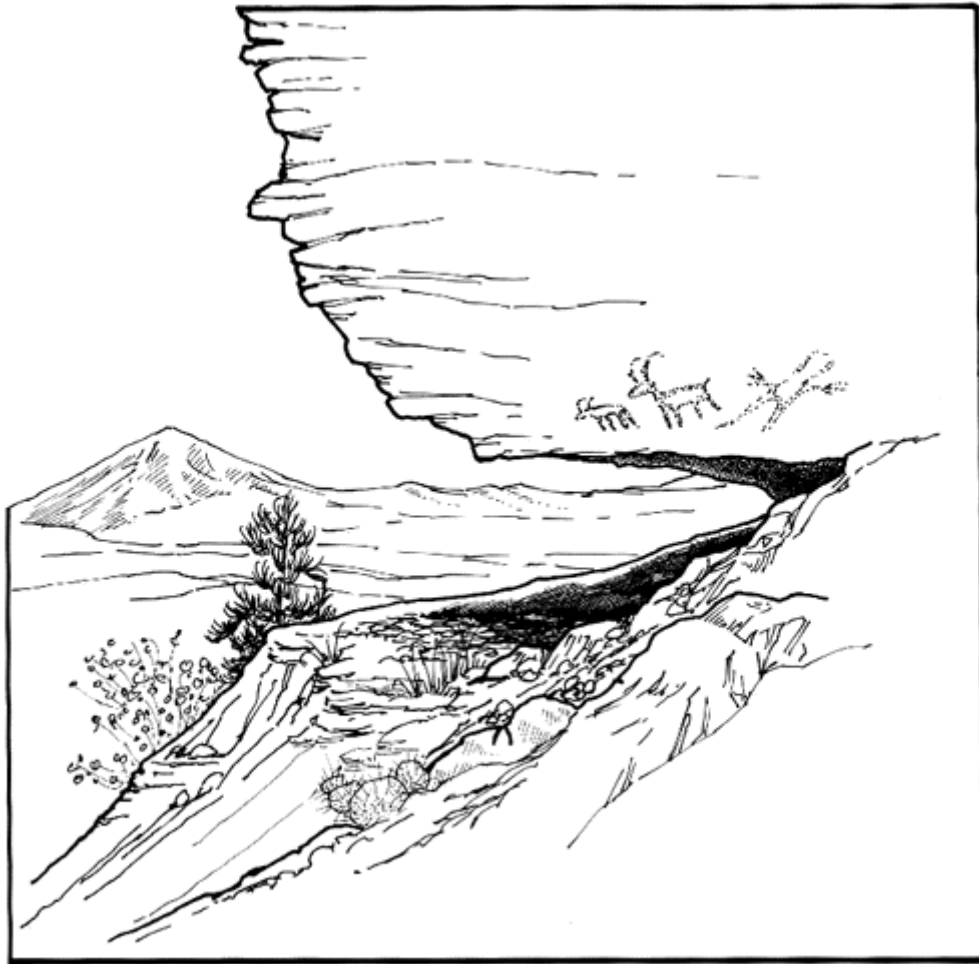
AGAVE PLANT

Post Number 4: Hunters and Gatherers

The Paiute Indians searched for plants everyday. They got meat from game they killed.

As the seasons changed, the Paiutes moved their homes. Oftentimes, they lived in rock shelters, like the one in front of you. In the heat of the summer, they moved up into the mountains, looking for game and enjoying the cooler weather. In the winter months, the Indians would live closer to the desert floor.

Lost Creek and Willow Spring are rich in cultural resources. Along with rock shelters, you might see petroglyphs carved into the rocks with tools made from local materials. Other cultural resources are pictographs, which were painted on the rocks, and agave roasting pits, which are limestone-lined cooking pits.



ROCK SHELTER

Post Number 5: Environments

You have already experienced several distinct environments on your hike today. In front of you is another: a desert meadow. Think of all the different plants and animals that inhabit each environment you have seen. Think about where you would expect to find a white-footed mouse, a desert bighorn, a roadrunner, or a whiptail lizard. Why do certain forms of life only live in certain environments?

Sit down and closely examine the grasses and rushes to the left of the trail. Look at the different colors! Listen to the wind rustling through the meadow. Write a sentence or two describing what you hear and see:

After a winter snowstorm or a summer thunderstorm, numerous waterfalls cascade upon the rocks. A few yards down and to your right, a trail continues to a large waterfall. The waterfall is part of a box canyon. If you would like to explore the box canyon and take a chance at seeing a running waterfall, then follow the trail, and you will reach the end of the canyon. If no water is flowing, you will see a wide black line upon the headwall in front of you. This line is produced by the water cascading down after a storm, leaving behind dissolved minerals.



DESERT WHIPTAIL

Post Number 6: Water Music

Sit down and close your eyes. Listen closely to the many sounds around you.
What did you hear?

Did the water have different tones? _____

Were they pleasing to the ear? _____

Walk over to the water. Write down what it sounds like.



Post Number 7: Old Friends

Every tree has a character of its own. The tree before you is no exception. Close your eyes and run your hand over the bark. How does it feel?

Look way up through the branches. What do you see?

Can you give the tree a name?

What does the bark smell like?

Why does a tree grow here?

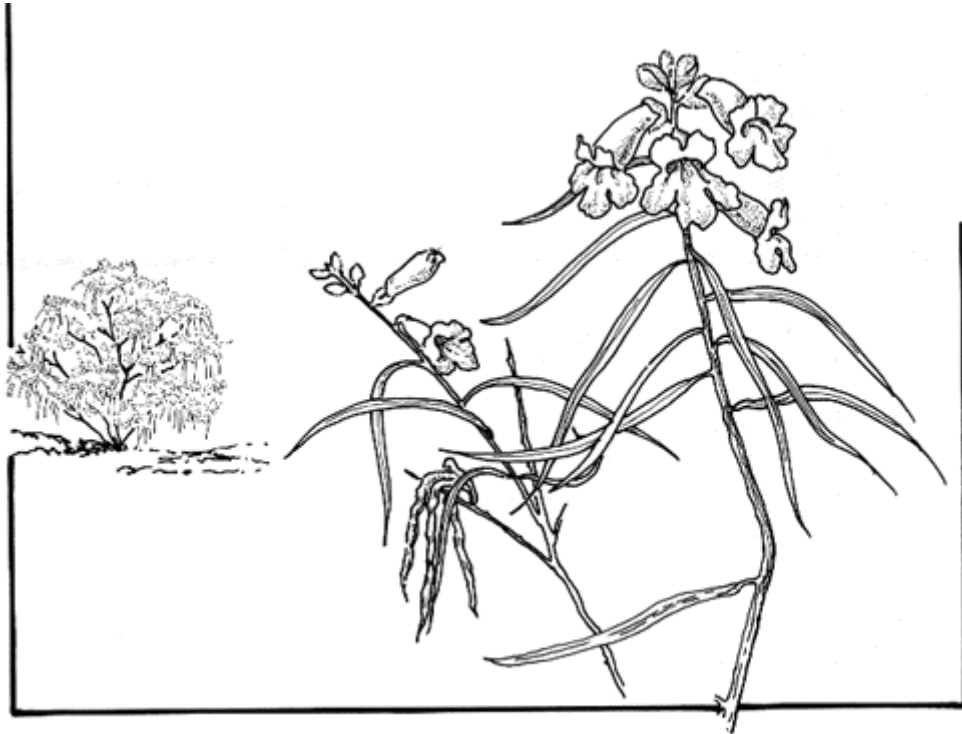


PONDEROSA PINE

Post Number 8: New Friends

Why do you think the branches of the desert willow are bendable and green?

Why do these trees grow here?



DESERT WILLOW

Post Number 9: Considerations

Before you leave the Lost Creek Trail and Red Rock Canyon, consider the following questions:

Did Red Rock Canyon supply the Paiutes with all of their needs? How?

Do you think modern people still need places like Red Rock Canyon? Why or Why not?

If you have an opportunity, continue on to Willow Spring to view an agave roasting pit. (It's the optional stop shown on your map.)

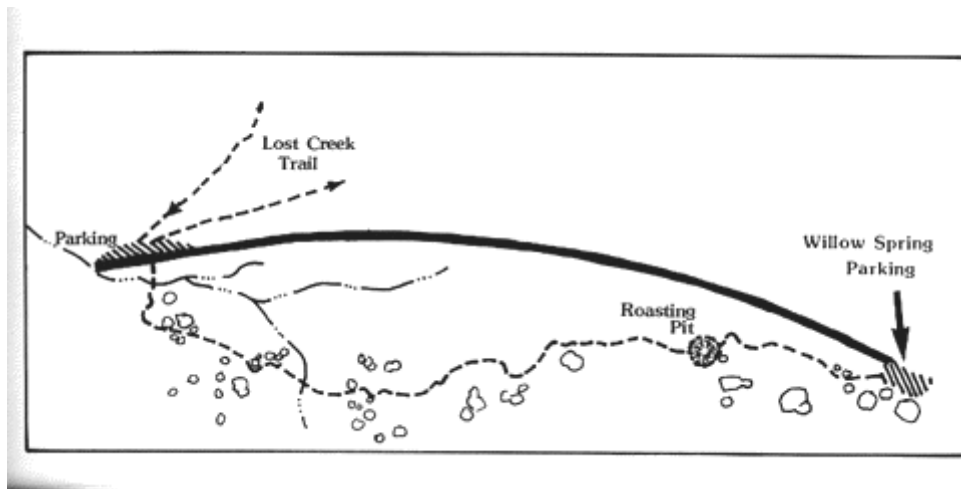
The roasting pit is .4 miles from the Lost Creek parking lot by trail. If you choose to drive to Willow Spring Picnic area, the roasting pit is about 50 yards from the restroom.



Optional Stop: Ancient Barbecue

Try to imagine how many roasts took place here. Each piece of limestone you see was only used a few times to provide heat for cooking. After a roast, the Native Americans would throw the rocks over their shoulders to get the cooked food below. In addition to agave, the Native Americans roasted many types of plants and meats in roasting pits.

Would you like to have been a Paiute living in Red Rock Canyon cooking your food in a roasting pit?



This publication was designed, written and illustrated by staff members of the Bureau of Land Management in Nevada

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