

NOTABLE HOLES

-of-

the Western United States



Mono Lake Basin, Calif. to Trona, Calif. [via Tonopah, Nev.]



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of
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Part I

Mono Lake, Calif. -to- Trona, Calif. (via Tonopah, Nev.)
October 3 thru October 9, 2016



WELCOME to this first installment of Notable Holes of the Western United States. This project is a speculative, conceptual research tour in which we will visit sites of opening across the landscape of western Nevada and eastern California. Lasting 6 days, from October 3 to October 9, this endeavor will bring us to all manner of mines, craters, caves, springs, valleys, fissures, tunnels, sumps, adits, and pits, as well as various other conceptual openings which have manifested physically into sites of interest in this strange, wonderful, and essential landscape. This tour is part of ongoing research into landscapes of extraction and aesthetics of excavation and absence in the American West, and comprises a piece and a beginning in our collective efforts to better understand the dynamics of these (post-eco)systems and economies.

This is important because these systems, which support and enable our contemporary American lives, exist in hybrid spaces (digital/physical, natural/industrial), and rely upon a strange burying — ‘the cloud’ requires fiber-optics underground, the fresh produce requires untold tons of phosphorous excavations. We are disconnected from these sites of extraction and systems of production, partially because many of them exist in landscapes and spaces that are far from the everyday lives of most of us. And though it might seem somewhat ironic that when we make it out here we find a landscape of stunning and stark beauty, this may actually speak volumes about how we understand our relationship to the spaces and resources that give breath to the technologies of our lives. This is an aesthetic relationship, an emotional relationship, not just a relationship of production and consumption. We should feel some sort of inspiration in these spaces.

But we also want to ask questions. We would be irresponsible not to do so. Climate change promises to wipe us off the map at a perfectly geologic rate of speed. Indian land continues to be stolen from underneath the feet of its rightful owners — people who've proven up for millenia on their right to occupancy. And the police still can't stop killing people of color. We won't solve these problems here, and we won't even begin to offer answers, but instead we maintain that a re-orientation is necessary. To perform this re-orientation, to direct ourselves more reliably toward the cardinal direction of anything less monstrous, requires openings to see through these systems and an opportunity to examine the ideologies and terms implicit in our use of them. This charge is open-ended and conceptual, but it is essential to the construction of a society more real and more whole. To shift perceptions and move toward equitable, vibrant, scaling systems and industries requires radical exercises in recontextualization. This project is seeking those exercises.

And finally, it's maximally important that these exercises carry a sense of curiosity and of play. In line with this, we want to conclude by reminding you that the essence of what we are doing is simply going and looking at some interesting stuff. It's there, and we'd like to know what it looks like.

SOME PERTINANT INFORMATION

This guide is laid out as a list of all the sites we will visit. It is broken up by the days on which we intend to visit them.

If we are able to find any swimming water (hot spring or otherwise) which people want to enter (and we can all fit) we will respect people's desires to get in with whatever amount of clothing they see fit. So, you may see naked people! Be warned.

We can't really tend to your vehicle, so we need you to be aware of the capabilities and functioning of said object. Make sure you don't drive into anything your car can't do, make sure you don't embark on a stretch too long for your gas tank (we believe we have planned such that this won't happen, but we want you to look at the map and make sure that's true for you).

Make sure you've got enough food for the next 3 days (it will be that long until we reach the next grocery store). Try to make sure it's not perishable too, or at least eat the perishable stuff first.

Make sure you've got enough water for about the same. There will be more chances to get water, and we'll fill up every time we get the chance, but you will always want to carry as much as possible for emergencies and good general practice.

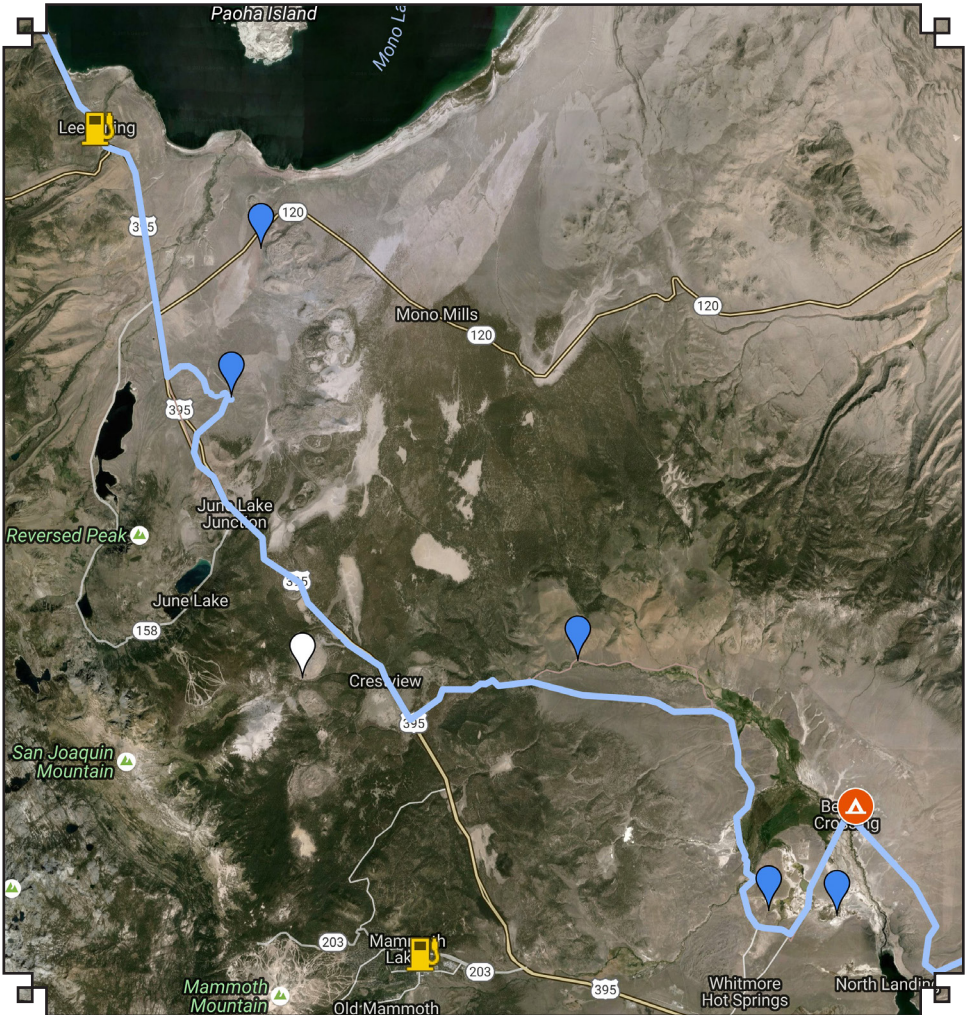
Don't use our maps for navigation. It won't work.

DAY 1

Mono Lake to Benton Crossing
35 miles, mostly pavement, dirt tracks to hot tubs

4 site visits

Camping near Benton Crossing
Gas, food, and water at Lee Vining, Calif.



SITE 02: Mono Craters

37.91207, -119.04206

Access: Any vehicle, unmarked single lane dirt track through a burn zone on the slopes west of the craters.

Directions: From the 395, turn east onto Hwy 120 towards Navy Beach/South Tufa. At 3.1 mi turn right (south) onto a dirt track leading up to the craters. Turn left at a fork 0.2 mi down the track. Continue another 0.2 mi to a rudimentary parking area. Note: this is a single dirt track with few places to turn around without harming plant life.



Obsidian

THE Mono Craters are a string of volcanic cones that erupted relatively recently in the geologic history of the area. The most dramatic cone, closest to Mono Lake, is an unending source of silver-sheen obsidian. Some chunks are larger than cars. Pumice is also abundant. Perhaps in this area we will stake an official claim.



An illustration of the Mono Craters by John Muir



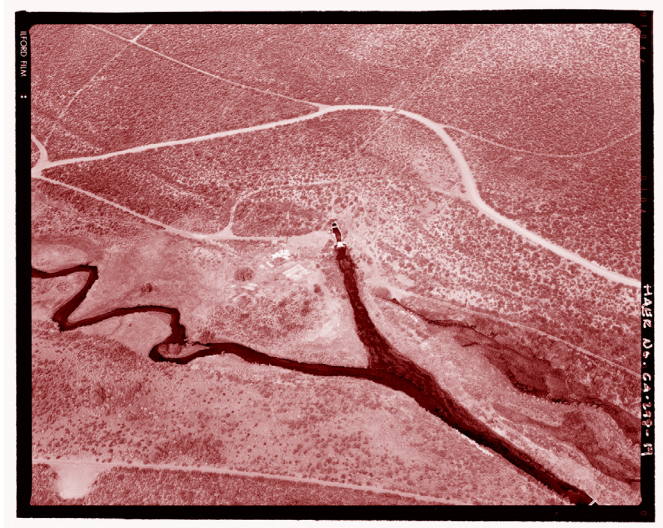


operations weather snow realtime data recreation watershed

SITE 03: LA Aqueduct Mono Craters Tunnel 37.75681, -118.89093 (East Portal)

Directions: After returning to the 395, continue south for approximately 9 miles, turning left onto Owens River Rd. In our attempt to find the the East Portal, we will continue on Owens River rd for about 3.75 miles, and then turn left onto an unnamed dirt road, crossing the river and then following it to the east for another 1.75 miles until we reach the portal. (We may not be successful in this, if not we will attempt to view the portal from the other side of the river)

THE Los Angeles Aqueduct, principle source of drinking water for the City of LA, begins north of here in the Mono Basin. Initially constructed to begin in the Owens Valley, the city built the Mono Extension in 1930 to collect water from the Mono Basin Watersheds and supplement the original source. This extension required tunneling underneath the Mono Craters for 11 miles an engineering feat at the time.



The East Portal of the Mono Craters Tunnel

Considered as a site of opening, the aqueduct is a fascinating object. Essentially a 420-mile hole laid horizontal, the aqueduct is a cornerstone in the lore and the logistics of living in the state of California connecting two physically distant locations through the fraught magic of water politics. This concept of the aqueduct as opening highlights the strange logics of transformation price and value, user of resource, legal status, etc. that happen on the 400-mile journey from portal to portal

Indeed the events of the Aqueduct's existence have created even more perceptual openings in their wake, allowing the law to open up enough for the Mono Lake Committee lawyers to enforce the doctrine of the public trust for the first time in United States Legal history. This case vastly over-simplified: LA may own the water in the creeks of the Mono Basin, but the government's obligation to maintain a public system (The Mono Lake Basin and watersheds) overrules the rights of that ownership.

SITE 04: Crab Cooker Hot Springs

37.662812, -118.800125

Directions: We'll go via the Owens River Rd., the but the easiest access is from 395, turning east onto Whitmore Tubs rd, hanging left at the Y to stay on Whitmore Tubs rd. After the Y it will be about 1.6 more miles, and then you'll take a right on an unnamed dirt road, travel for about .5 miles, and then take the first left on another dirt road where it'll be about .5 miles to the site.

FRIEND of Holes™ Cari Carmean has come through with some reconnaissance indicating that Crab Cooker has likely been put out of commission, either by the elements or resentful locals. People of the Great Basin have often been likened by my mother to Rattlesnakes – give them their space and they are fine. So if local sabotage is the reality, we understand their hot springs predicament.

Crab cooker may end up being a very brief stop.



Most of the land in this area is owned by the City of Los Angeles

SITE 05: Wild Willy's Hot Springs

37.66103, -118.76776

IN the same vicinity as Crab Cooker (along with the countless other springs along Whitmore Tubs road), and just as crowded. We recommend a visit sometime when it's midnight in the dead of winter and you have a monster truck to get out there – maybe that will be the optimum time to enjoy a soak in isolation.

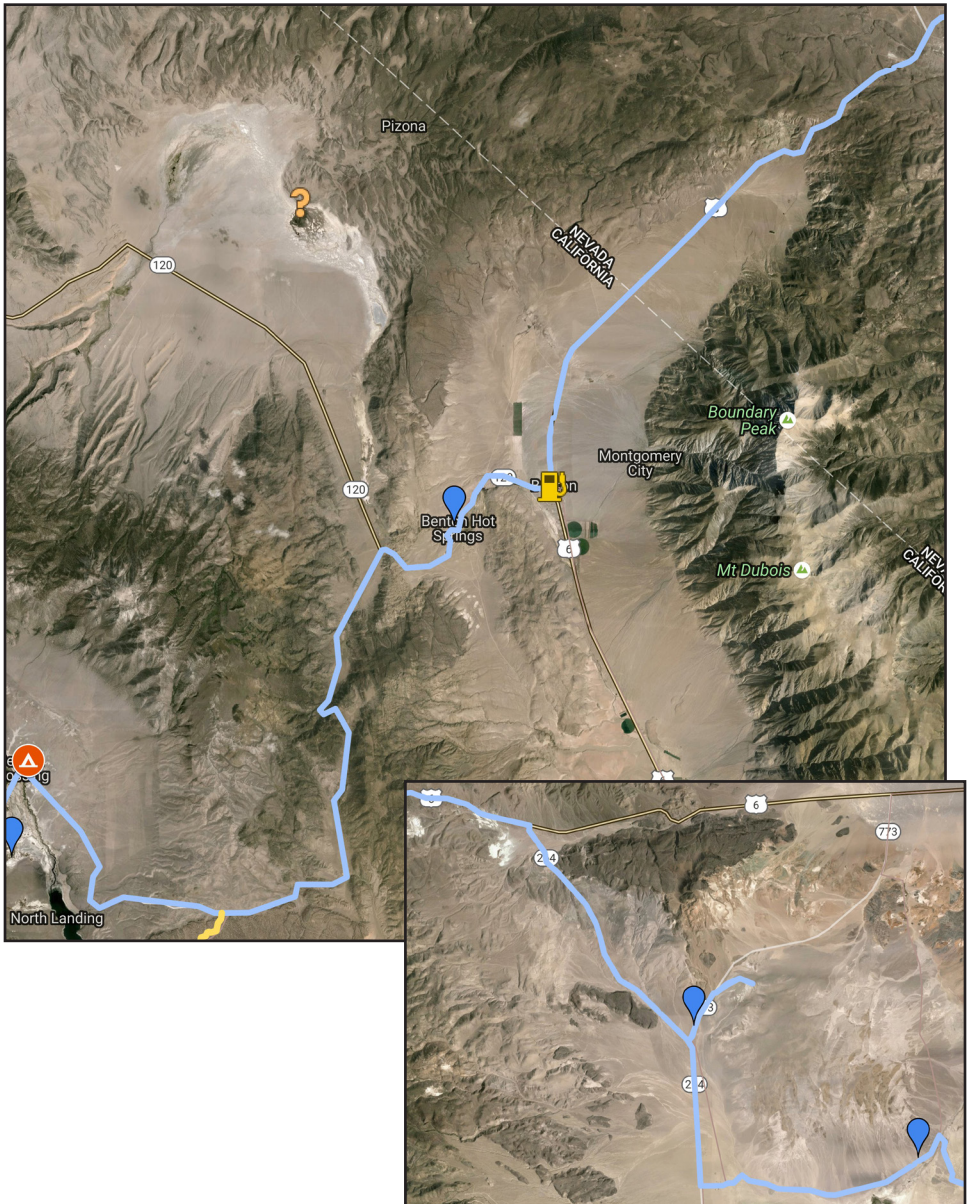
Similarly to Crab Cooker, Wild Willy's may end up being a very brief stop.



DAY 2

Crowley Lake to FishLake Valley Hot Well
80 miles, mostly paved, rough dirt side trip, dirt to Hot Well
4 or 5 site visits

Camping near Fish Lake Valley Hot Well (unimproved)
Gas and water at Benton Station, Calif.
no services for 108 miles after Benton Station.



SITE 06: Crowley Lake Columns

37.58825, -118.72873

Access: 4WD recommended, multiple single track dirt roads lead to the shore of Crowley lake. Watch out for sand!

Directions: The tracks that lead to the shores of Crowley Lake are marked service roads, but the signposts are often overlooked and the route can be confusing. The simplest way to reach the lake from pavement is as follows: From the 395 take Benton Crossing Road through the Long Valley Caldera. At 11.6 miles you will see Layton Crossing Rd on your right — drive past it. Our unmarked dirt track is on the right exactly 2 miles AFTER Layton Crossing Road. Find the dirt track and follow the path most traveled from here, as there are a many places to turn off the track. We will follow this main dirt track about 6 miles to the shore. There are plenty of places for folks to park once we reach the lake.

Important: this road has many dips and turns. Bep your horn around blind spots and go slow to avoid a face-off with an oncoming vehicle.



The columns at Crowley Lake. Observe the sage brush in the photo for scale.

Photo: Alison J Cole

SITE 07: Benton and Benton Hot Springs

37.81862, -118.47741

THIS fabulous hot springs resort has been known to ease the bones of many a desert wanderer, and might be the perfect combination of unimproved and improved (a curious phrasing in and of itself). Just watch out for what my friend Jenny Rose describes as “the guy on the bike.” We’ll get gas here, as long as the gas station is still around. (proceeds benefit Utu Utu Gwaitu, or “Hot Water Place People”, Paiute Tribe)

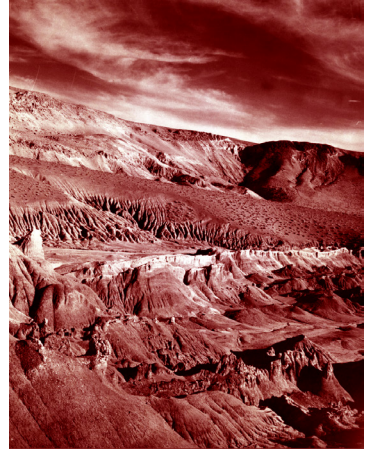
SITE 08: The Sump

37.9174500°, -118.1069833°

Access: 4WD recommended to enter the Sump's wash, any vehicle can park near wash and hike in.

Directions: (adapted from William Kappeler's Rockhounding Nevada) Head south on the NV 773 from its intersection with US 6 (east of Coaldale Junction, now a ghost town). At 7.8 miles you will come to a dirt track on your left. Follow this track for 0.5 mile to a large wash. 4WD vehicles may be able to drive down into the wash (there is a steep bank here). Low clearance vehicles may want to park and walk down into the wash.

THE Sump is the colloquial name given to a system of eroding badlands that once formed the basin of ancient Lake Esmeralda. The majority of this geological area is within BLM jurisdiction, so dispersed camping and rockhounding are allowed. Notable specimens to collect in this basin are compacted paleosoils, opalite, petrified wood, and fluorescent agates (Dual UV lamp required). Fossils laws are as follows: petrified wood may be collected up to 25lbs per person per day. Vertebrate fossils cannot be collected and must remain on site.



Colorful badlands flank the Sump to the north. Photo: Alison J Cole

SITE 09: Fish Lake Valley Hot Well

37.86008, -117.98379

Directions: Heading south on NV 264, turn left onto Willow Rd, then hang left as a more-trafficked spur takes off from the straight road. Continue on this road for just over 7 miles, skirting the base of the hills to the left, until your arrival at the site.

IT is actually unclear if the Fish Lake Valley Hot Well is a well or a spring. We'll leave that up to you. We've never been there before, but here's a scene report from The Gypsies Townsend:

We had to pass this great spot up last spring while we where [sic] in the area. After reconfiguring our travel route a couple of weeks ago we decided to make this stop a priority. Upon arrival we were greeted by at least 10 other RVs all with ATVs. It seems a off road club was having their yearly get together. We spent four nights camping near the well. Generator use by the other campers was heavy both night and day. Soaking before 6am guaranteed some peaceful alone time. We will come back here again, but not in October. October is the prime riding time for this valley, and large groups of dirt bikes rule. We like our soaks to be quiet and don't bathe or bring glass bottles near the water. The latter seems to be the norm here. Our stay was very eventful. A small plane landed on the gravel road and the pilot soaked. We were also visited by the county sheriff who asked if we had a shotgun with us. Someone had shot some vehicles near a mine the night before. For such a remote place there was a lot going on. [<http://www.thegypsiestownsend.com/2011/10/fish-lake-hot-well-soak-report.html>]

Seeing as this is the month of October, we may not end up spending much time here at the sure-to-be madhouse either. And all this in spite of the fact that this area is said to be one of the best kept secrets in Esmeralda County, which is itself a secret at that. In spite of the fact that this hot spring surely exists inside a hole of most people's geographic perception, it remains popular.



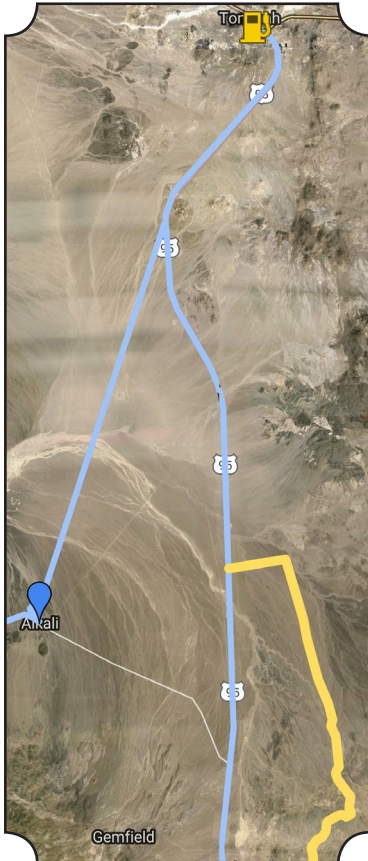
Fish Lake Valley, not the Hot Well. Photo: Charlie Macquarie

DAY 3

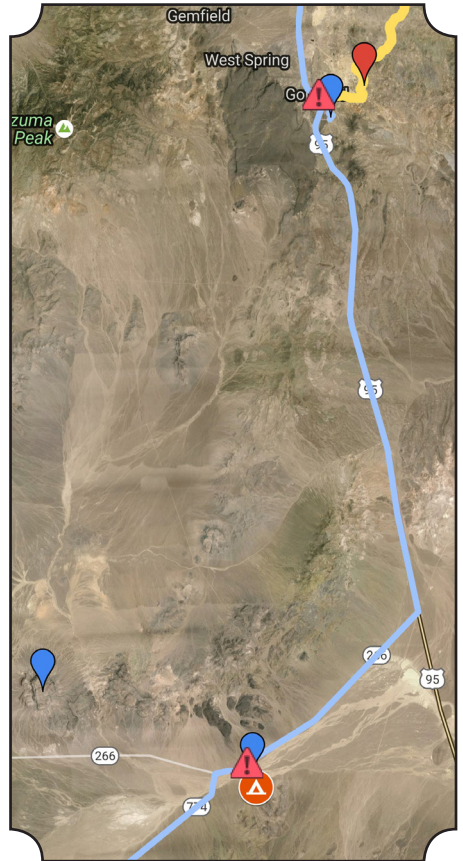
Fish Lake Valley to Lida Valley
109 miles, 47 miles paved, 55 miles on dirt
4.5 or 5 site visits
Camping in the Lida Valley (unimproved)
Gas, food, and water in Tonopah, Nev.
no services for 147 miles after Tonopah.



Leg 1



Leg 2



Leg 3

SITE 10: Silver Peak Lithium Mines

37.7684, -117.58735

Directions: We will travel directly from Fish Lake Valley Hot Well via a mysterious dirt rd through the mountains past “Coyote Hole”, but the easiest access to Silver peak is to take NV 265 south from US 50. The road ends in Silver Peak, so you won’t miss it.

SILVER Peak as hole might not be descriptive enough. Mine, Energy Sump, Speculation Sink, Green Technology Settling Basin — this perpetual “not-quite ghost town” (pop. 107) has been on the way out since 1864 when it was founded. The town even gained some fame as the site where scheming Enron energy traders re-routed 2900 MW of electrical energy, overloading the grid and causing major Calif. power outages, and perhaps starting some of the cracks in the corporate facade which would eventually shatter completely.

Silver Peak’s latest lifeline is the Lithium Industry, and in fact the Albermarle Chemical’s Rockwood Lithium Mine located in the lakebed here is the United States’ only domestic source of this essential mineral — crucial for our battery-powered lives. The recent construction of Tesla’s Reno, Nev. Gigafactory has fueled a boom in lithium speculation in this valley, with at least 12 different “Lithium startups” hoping to cash in.

Most lithium mining happens in not quite a hole, but instead in evaporation ponds where dissolved lakebed sediments are pumped into ponds to let the water evaporate away while the lithium chemicals stay behind. Ironically enough though, these ponds have large environmental impacts, and the future of lithium mining is in flux as no new evaporation ponds are likely to be approved for construction in this country. Perhaps instead, this supply chain node reminds us of the holes in the concept of “green” digital technologies. At least though, the ponds themselves are sometimes that color.

One thing’s for sure — don’t call it a shortcut.



Lithium evaporation ponds at the Rockwood Lithium Mine

Google Maps Help Forum public

★ Silver Peak Road Nevada

by Carol Deanne Rowland Jun 17

Driving from Reno to Las Vegas last week we were tired and hoping to reach our destination as close to midnight as possible. The map said there was a shorter route. We took it and halfway through it said pavement ends. It took twice the time driving on kelly's gravel roads with no light, miles from any living person, bumps and holes from the road construction vehicles and we ended up with one flat and two tires losing air. Silver Peak road is not a finished road. When they finish making the dirt path a road it will be nice but they should not send people to it until it is finished.

Categories: Getting directions (driving only) Google Maps for Mobile Fix a problem or issue Android N/A - Mobile App 2 posts 8 views

SITE 11: Alkali Hot Springs

37.82528, -117.3377

Directions: This will be along our route from Silver Peak to Tonopah, but if coming from elsewhere, drive on US 95 and take the turn off for Silver Peak Rd., about 4 miles north of Goldfield. After continuing on this road for just under 7 miles, you will arrive at the site.

THIS little hot spring was something we stumbled upon while making the map, so the reality is that we have very little to say about it.

We are, however, interested generally in the phenomena of Hot Springs and Hot Spring tourism in the Western US, so this seemed like a natural point to stop.

Perhaps we will get in, or perhaps we'll just leave it to Wonder Hussy to describe the experience to us.



With so few reviews, your opinion of **Alkali Hot Springs** could be huge. Start your review today.

SITE 11.5: Tonopah, Nev.

38.06538, -117.22766

IT may be small, but there's still too much to Tonopah to cover here. For one thing, it's known as the "home of the Stealth Fighter."

For another, this will be our only resupply point for food, so stock up!

SITE 12: Plane Outside Goldfield

37.7179, -117.2169

no directions to this site.

NOTHING is known about why this plane is sitting on the desert floor outside Goldfield. Surely, it involves some kind of a hole in our perceptions of the world, though probably not one whose cleaning would allow us to see things as they really are — infinite.



SITE 13: International Car Forest of the Last Church

37.69911, -117.22861

Directions: In Goldfield, turn off US 95 onto Crystal Ave heading east, following the road as it turns to dirt. Take the 3rd right, and proceed along this road until reaching the Car Forest just a few thousand feet further.

LITERALLY this is several dozen cars buried in the ground such that they sprout like otherworldly desert plants. Sometimes they are painted. Sometimes they are lit on fire. Articles on this site are plentiful, so go ahead and google some up!

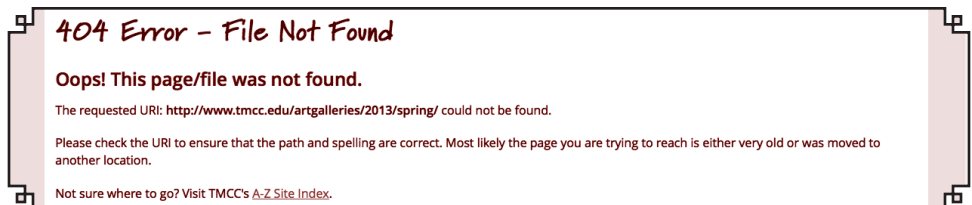
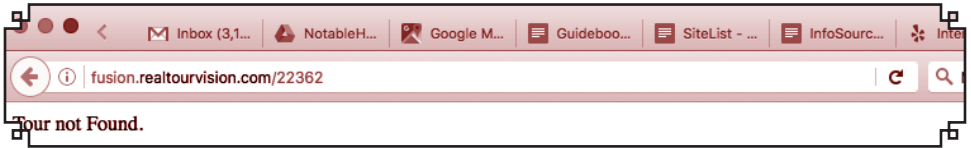
Figuratively, I find it most interesting that the International Car Forest exists along the ongoing back and forth between the cultural life of isolated, weird spaces and a regional economy based upon colonial resource extraction. As an opening between these two worlds, this site tracks who falls through, to where, and what comes out the other end.

Various figures involved in the Car Forest's history have been de-facto Goldfield mayors (no actual mayor, because Goldfield is unincorporated), have been impeached from those positions, have planned end of the world parties, have linked the site to the larger Nevada wide art communities, and have, in the end, simply settled down to stay in a place where you can take a tractor out into the sagebrush and dig a hole to throw a bus into. People and lives move back and forth from here to there. On this day we will arrive *here* to find pieces of rusted steel and tracks through the brush — material traces of hopes and dreams.



Advertisement

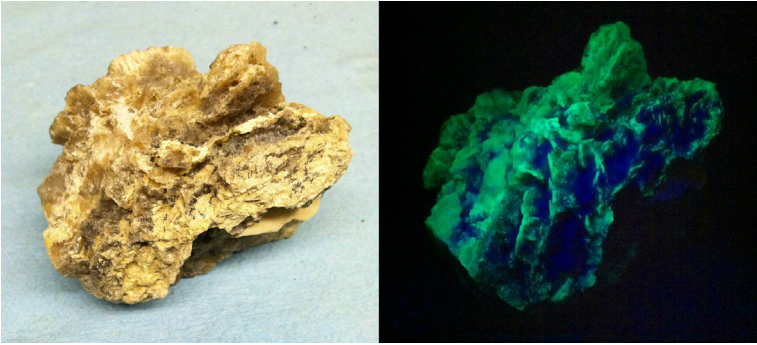
Some of the Broken URLs from the Car Forest about page reveal holes in the architecture of the internet as well.



SITE 14: Gold Point Fluorescent Minerals

37.43678, -117.26783

Access: 4WD recommended due to a dip immediately off the paved road. Vehicles unable to make it may park safely alongside the 226 and hike in.



*An ugly agate fluoresces under shortwave UV light.
Collected in the area by Alison Jean Cole.*

Directions: (adapted from William Kappeler's Rockhounding Nevada) From the intersection of US 95 and NV 226 head west on 266 for 6.3 miles. A faint dirt track on the left (south) will take you into the collecting area. There is rumored to be quite a dip at the access point off the highway, so take care and don't take any risks! The collecting area is just off the pavement.

THIS is a location that William Kappeler included in Rockhounding Nevada. Supposedly there is fluorescent chalcedony (agate) to be found among the low hills outside the town of Gold Point. A dual UV lamp will be required to enjoy the specimens.



*A few people
still live in Gold
Point, Nevada.
Photo: Alison J
Cole*



SITE 16: Gold Point, Nev.

37.35465, -117.36507

Access: Any vehicle can pull into Gold Point. Be courteous about where you park. Some folks live here.

Directions: From the intersection of US 95 and NV 226, travel west on the 226 for 7.2 miles to NV 774. Turn south on NV 774 for approximately 7.4 miles where you will suddenly find yourself amidst the ruins of Gold Point. NV.

GOLD Point was once a lively gold mining town beyond the eastern fringe of Death Valley. Unless we want to apply it as a derogatory term, Gold Point is not quite a physical hole. It is however, a site of hole-boom, and shows openings in our concepts of civics — an entire city built up and broken down within a few years. The most notable living residents of Gold Point are the folks who live in each of the Saloons. They are not friends, and both claim a Mayor-like status over the town.



DAY 4

Gold Point to Panamint Valley

130 miles, 19 on dirt, short dirt again to campsite

5 or 6 site visits

Camping in the Panamint Valley (unimproved)

Gas and water in Stovepipe Wells and Panamint Springs

no services after hours @ Panamint Springs. If closed, no services for 175 miles after Stovepipe wells.



SITE 17: Hard Luck Castle and Mine

37.264855, -117.259835

Access: Any vehicle

Directions: From US 95 turn onto NV 267 toward Bonnie Claire. After 6.7 miles turn right onto Bonnie Claire Road. Follow this graded dirt road 9 miles to the Castle.

ORIGINALLY built to satisfy the urge for a one-of-a-kind private fortress and two pipe organs (and a media room!), this structure is currently for sale. We may have the option of going on a tour (\$10/person) of this site, but it will depend on what time of day we pass by (10am - 3pm only)



One of the two pipe organs at the Hard Luck Castle. We're not sure which one.




SITE 18: Bonnie Claire (Clair) (Clare)

37.22888, -117.13013

Directions: We'll come to this site from Hard Luck Mine, but if coming from other directions than head west on NV 267 from US 95, continuing for about 6.5 miles. At this point, turn right onto Bonnie Clair Rd.

LITTLE remains of Bonnie Claire today, but at one time it was the terminus of a branch of the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad (which never quite made it close enough to the ocean to reach tidewater).

The remaining structure is fascinating enough though, and is currently under the ownership of Tonogold Resources who hope one day to re-process the tailings for left-over gold a concept which in and of itself opens up space for thought around extraction and the blind spots and openings in the economics which drive it. Tonogold may be on solid footing though, as their investment plan includes several essential elements, my favorite of which being "participation in multiple deals." Coincidentally, this is my economic strategy as well.



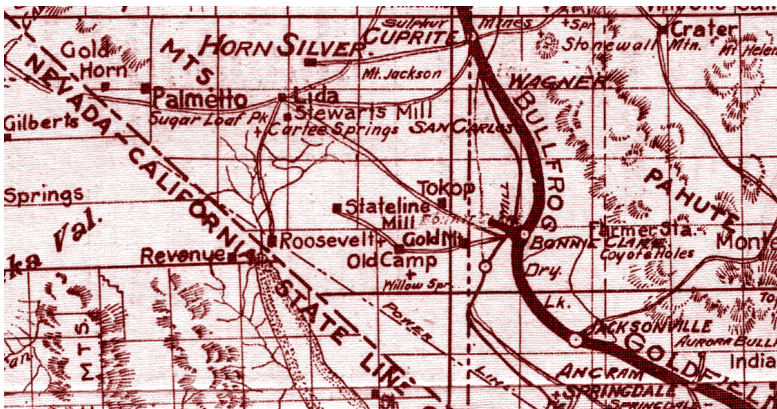
TO RHYOLITE BEATTY GOLD CENTER BONNIE CLAIRE GOLDFIELD TONOPAH

F. M. SMITH, President JOHN RYAN, General Manager
 C. B. ZABORSKI, Secretary and Treasurer
 W. R. ALBERGER, Traffic Manager, LOS ANGELES

THE NEVADA SHORT LINE
 Time Tables

TONOPAH & TIDEWATER COMPANY
 BETWEEN
 LOS ANGELES, SAN DIEGO, RIVERSIDE
 SAN BERNARDINO, SAN FRANCISCO,
 SILVER LAKE, TECOPA, BEATTY, RHYOLITE
 SPRINGDALE, GOLDFIELD, TONOPAH
 DAILY

HEAD DOWN			Santa Fe			HEAD UP		
No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 5	No. 6	No. 7	No. 8	No. 9
11:50	7:25	10:30	11:50	7:25	10:30	11:50	7:25	10:30
Ar. Los Angeles	Lv. Los Angeles	Ar. Los Angeles	Lv. Los Angeles	Lv. Los Angeles	Ar. Los Angeles	Lv. Los Angeles	Ar. Los Angeles	Lv. Los Angeles
12:00	8:00	11:00	12:00	8:00	11:00	12:00	8:00	11:00
Ar. Riverside	Lv. Riverside	Ar. Riverside	Lv. Riverside	Lv. Riverside	Ar. Riverside	Lv. Riverside	Ar. Riverside	Lv. Riverside
12:10	8:10	11:10	12:10	8:10	11:10	12:10	8:10	11:10
Ar. San Francisco	Lv. San Francisco	Ar. San Francisco	Lv. San Francisco	Lv. San Francisco	Ar. San Francisco	Lv. San Francisco	Ar. San Francisco	Lv. San Francisco
12:20	8:20	11:20	12:20	8:20	11:20	12:20	8:20	11:20
Ar. San Bernardino	Lv. San Bernardino	Ar. San Bernardino	Lv. San Bernardino	Lv. San Bernardino	Ar. San Bernardino	Lv. San Bernardino	Ar. San Bernardino	Lv. San Bernardino
12:30	8:30	11:30	12:30	8:30	11:30	12:30	8:30	11:30
Ar. Tecopa	Lv. Tecopa	Ar. Tecopa	Lv. Tecopa	Lv. Tecopa	Ar. Tecopa	Lv. Tecopa	Ar. Tecopa	Lv. Tecopa
12:40	8:40	11:40	12:40	8:40	11:40	12:40	8:40	11:40
Ar. Beatty	Lv. Beatty	Ar. Beatty	Lv. Beatty	Lv. Beatty	Ar. Beatty	Lv. Beatty	Ar. Beatty	Lv. Beatty
12:50	8:50	11:50	12:50	8:50	11:50	12:50	8:50	11:50
Ar. Rhyolite	Lv. Rhyolite	Ar. Rhyolite	Lv. Rhyolite	Lv. Rhyolite	Ar. Rhyolite	Lv. Rhyolite	Ar. Rhyolite	Lv. Rhyolite
1:00	9:00	12:00	1:00	9:00	12:00	1:00	9:00	12:00
Ar. Goldfield	Lv. Goldfield	Ar. Goldfield	Lv. Goldfield	Lv. Goldfield	Ar. Goldfield	Lv. Goldfield	Ar. Goldfield	Lv. Goldfield
1:10	9:10	12:10	1:10	9:10	12:10	1:10	9:10	12:10
Ar. Tonopah	Lv. Tonopah	Ar. Tonopah	Lv. Tonopah	Lv. Tonopah	Ar. Tonopah	Lv. Tonopah	Ar. Tonopah	Lv. Tonopah



SITE 19: Ubehebe Crater
37.009658, -117.450738

Access: Any vehicle

Directions: From “Bonnie Clair” continue on NV 267 toward Death valley NP. We’ll cross back into CA here. At 22.4 miles turn right into Ubehebe Road and follow 5.3 to a parking area at the trail-head.

KNOWN to the Timbisha Shoshone (who continue to fight to remain on their ancestral homeland inside the park) as Tem-pin-tta- Wo’sah, this crater was formed when hot magma rising to the surface met groundwater, and the resulting flash-vaporization created a massive explosion. An emerging tradition encourages us to pose sexy with the warning sign at the cliff’s edge... will you take part?



Self portrait by Peggy Mekemson



Self portrait by Byddi Lee

SITE 20: Crater Sulfur Mine
37.212319, -117.688162

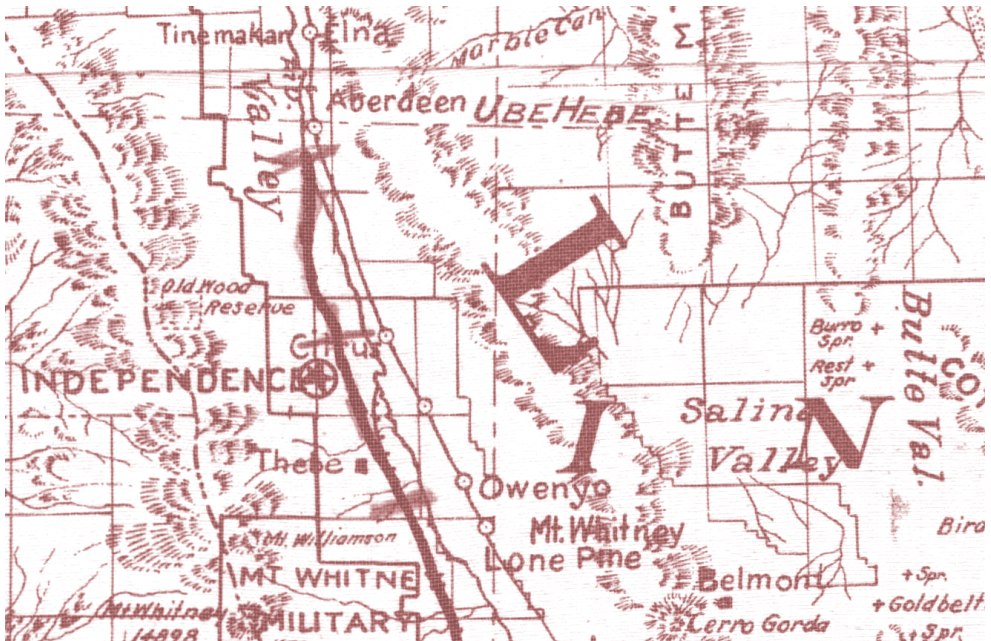


©Death Valley Jim - www.deathvalleyjim.com

Crater, Calif., through the lens of infamous tour guide "Death Valley Jim".

Access: 4WD recommended

Directions: Travel north for 2.8 miles on Ubehebe Crater Road to its intersection with Death Valley Road and turn left. Travel NW for 28.3 miles on Death Valley Road up into the hills where a dirt track turns right and leads through the sulphur piles and what remains of the mining camp.



SITE 21: Darwin Falls

36.32083, -117.52431

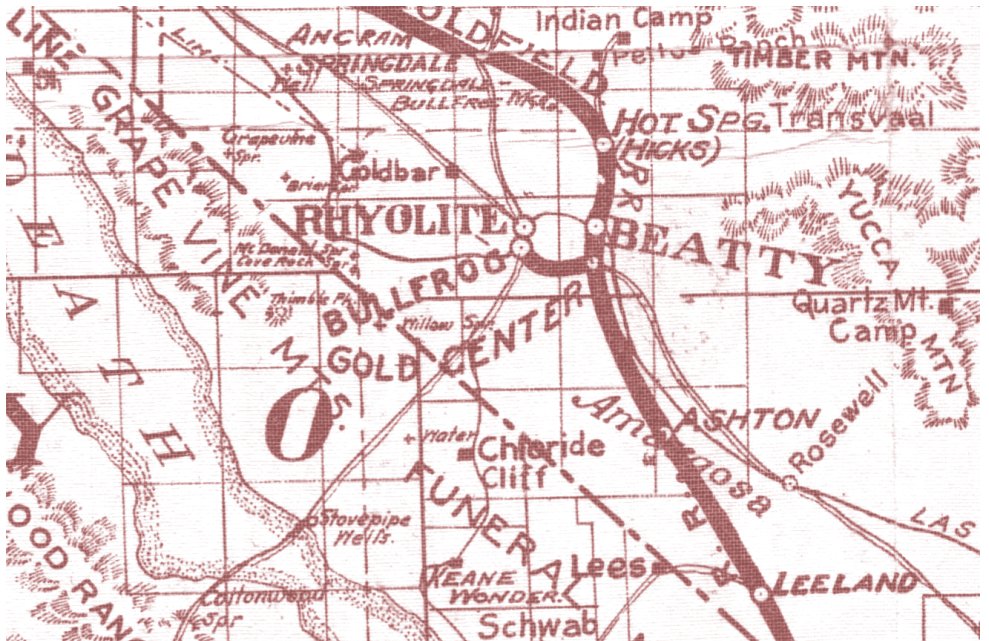
Directions: heading west on US 190 out of Panamint Springs, take the first left onto Old Toll Rd.. Continue on this road until what seems like the right time, and then stop and walk up the wash until reaching the pool.



A helpful map

FED by one of only 4 total perennial streams inside Death Valley National Park, Darwin Falls

exists as an opening from a desert ecosystem to a watered one. Though Darwin Falls is not known to contain any species endemic to the site, Death Valley has several other such sites which are home to species that exist only there — new solutions found where openings allow two worlds to meet.



DAY 5

Panamint Valley to Trona, Calif.

159 miles, mostly paved, dirt on side trip to Cerro Gordo

4 or 5 site visits

Camping near Trona Pinnacles

Gas and water in Panamint Springs and Trona

no services after hours @ Panamint Springs. No groceries in Trona.



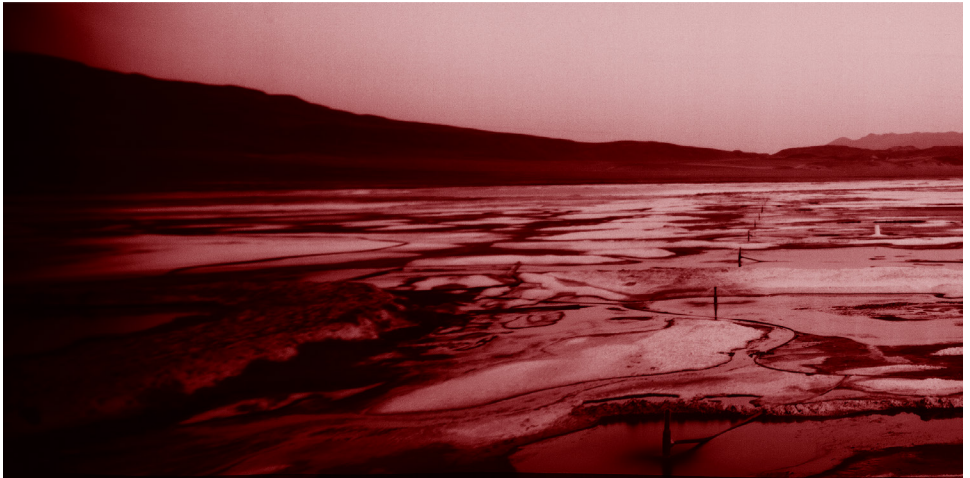
SITE 22: Cerro Gordo, Calif.

36.53803, -117.79446

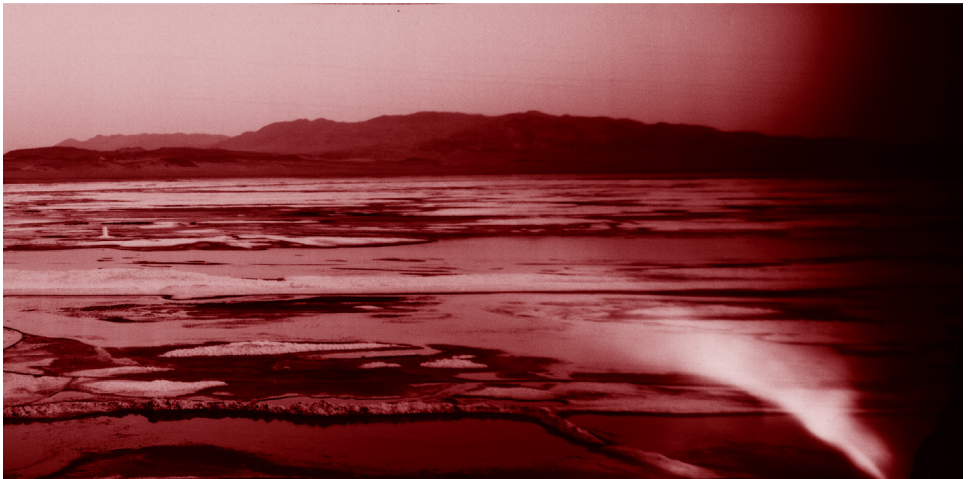
Directions: From CA 136 in Keeler, turn east onto Cerro Gordo rd, and follow it into the mountains for about 8 miles until it ends in Cerro Gordo.

ANOTHER living ghost town, Cerro Gordo was an extraordinarily rich silver camp founded and worked by Mexican miners. As is the case with most such camps, the ground beneath Cerro Gordo is punctured by hundreds of literal holes. At last check, the groundskeeper continues to mine tiny amounts of silver to this day, subsidized by artist Lauren Bon's quest to use this silver to produce the film necessary for the liminal camera/indexical image project — an effort to make images of the Owens Valley using only materials sourced from the Valley itself.

You can also stay here, in a bunkhouse, though this is not part of our plan.



A view across the Owens Lake toward Cerro Gordo, taken by the Liminal Camera



SITE 23: Ruth Mine

35.890371, -117.410275

Access: Any vehicle

Directions: Travelling on Hwy 178 seek out Homewood Canyon Road about 10 miles north of Trona. Travel up Homewood Canyon Rd, staying to the right. The mine site will be at the end of the paved road. The gate to the mine site is locked, but you can park your car and follow the path to the kiosk board. Please respect the no trespassing signs near the caretaker's home. The road leading to the mine is paved, but for the the last half mile, watch out for potholes.

FROM <http://www.mindat.org/loc-79373.html>

A former Au mine located 0.2 km (0.2 mile) SE of Reward, S of Eclipse Canyon (4.7 miles N of Owenyo Station). MRDS database accuracy for this location is not stated.

Mineralization is hosted in quartz monzonite. The ore body strikes N65W-WNW and dips 60-70SW at a thickness of 12.19 meters. Controls for ore emplacement included a fault. Ore is iron-stained quartz fragments and stringers in a fissure 6 to 40 feet thick. Local alteration includes oxidation. Local rocks include Carboniferous marine rocks, unit 3 (SE California Clastic Assemblage).

Workings include surface and underground openings comprised of a glory hole 200 feet long by 100 feet wide and the main working adit, called the "tunnel level" from which a winze and "footwall shaft" were sunk. Lateral workings, including the "tunnel level," "intermediate level," and crosscuts and drifts running from the winze and footwall shaft, total more than 2,700 feet.



Peering into the Ruth Mine, from the Encyclopedia of Forlorn Places blogger.

SITE 25: Trona, Calif.; Searles Lake; and Gem-O-Rama
35.759823, -117.373856



Salt encrusted pants standing alone. Photos: Susan O.; Searles Lake Gem & Mineral Society

From: <http://www.iwvisp.com/tronagemclub/GEM-O-RAMA.htm>

FOR more than seventy years, countless thousands of visitors have come to Trona during the second weekend in October for the annual Gem-O-Rama. And each year more collectors converge for the 36 hours of frantic, non-stop activity to collect some of the best and most desirable evaporite mineral specimens in the world.

Since the first show, the Searles Lake Gem and Mineral Society has worked closely with the management and employees of the owner/operator on Searles Lake to provide one of the most exciting mineral collecting field trips available in the world. These field trips and your experiences would be impossible without their co-operation, dedication and vision.

If you visit Trona this year, please take time afterwards to write a short note of appreciation to Searles Valley Minerals. Your letters will help ensure that this opportunity remains available for others. SVMC's address is:

Searles Valley Minerals Corp.
P. O. Box 367
13200 Main St.
Trona, California 93592-0367

A few sites for afterwards



SITE 26: Trona Pinnacles

35.617231, -117.368154

Access: Any vehicle

Directions: The Trona Pinnacles are about 9 miles from Searles Lake. Follow Hwy 178 south from Searles Lake and watch for signs for the Pinnacles. The 5-mile long dirt road from SR 178 to the Pinnacles is usually accessible to 2-wheel drive vehicles, however, the road may be closed during the winter months after a heavy rain.

WE may camp at this site during Gem-O-Rama, and bask in its otherworldliness – well-enough known that it's been featured as locations in Planet of the Apes, Battlestar Galactica, Star Trek, The Gate II, Lost in Space, and several others.



*A army of apes preparing for battle at the Trona Pinnacles. Photo: Ape/
Paul Bunnell*

SITE 27: Manzanar, Calif.

36.72767, -118.14765

Directions: from Lone Pine, continue north on 395 for 11 miles. At this point, take a left off the highway following signs for Manzanar National Historic Site, which is right next to the road.

MANZANAR is not on our route, though it is not far off either, so we hope interested participants will visit before or after this tour is complete

This National Historic Site is a former concentration camp, one of ten built by the United States to imprison the entire population of Japanese Americans, who were sent there en masse without trial or due process during WWII. In addition to these ten camps the US maintained dozens of smaller ones, which had been prepared to whisk away Japanese community leaders at a moment's notice—a task executed with ruthless efficiency in the hours after Pearl Harbor was attacked. We try not to be too didactic with the structure of this tour, but this gaping hole in human rights is something crucial to remember and revive in this current moment of anti-human rhetoric.



The monument at the Manzanar cemetery



Make smart choices!

-Alison Jean Cole-
-Charlie Macquarie-

#NotableHoles2016





LIBRARY
OF APPROX.
LOCATION