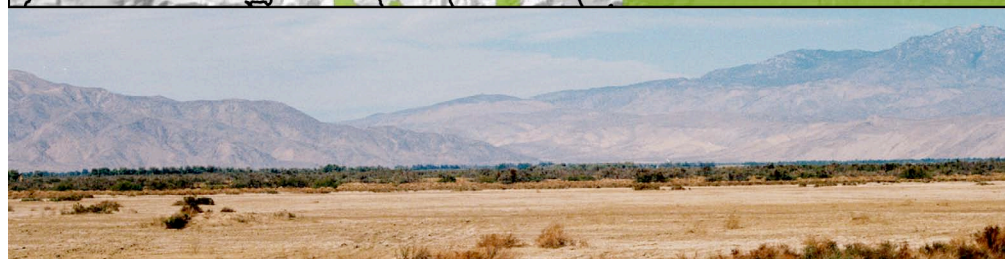
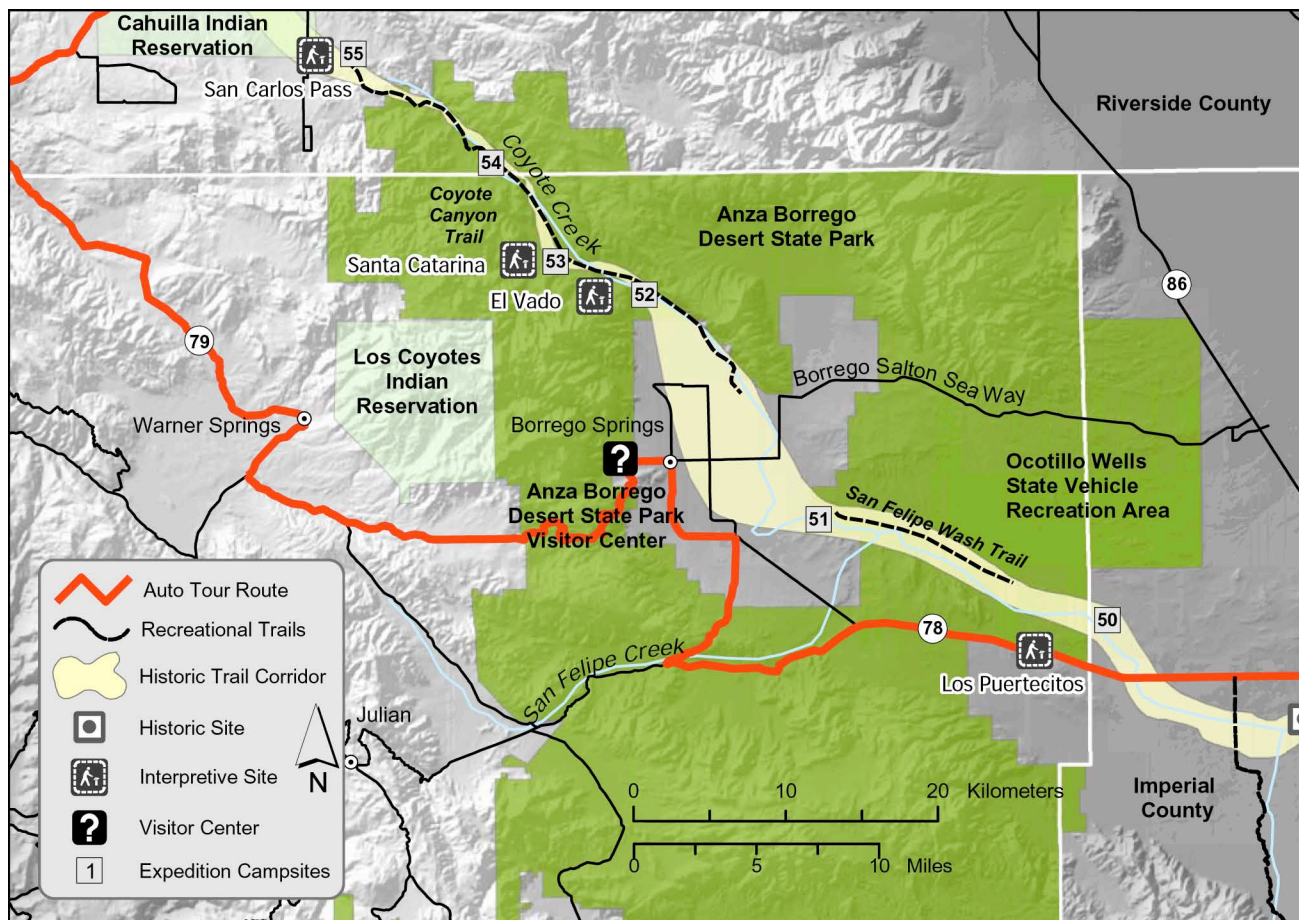


San Diego County – San Gregorio to Coyote Creek



San Diego County – San Gregorio to Coyote Creek



The view from San Gregorio (Camp #51) north-west towards Anza-Borrego's Coyote Canyon.

Photo: Greg Smestad

Driving Directions for Auto Route

CA 78 parallels the San Felipe Wash, the historic trail's route. Follow it west to the Yaqui Pass/County Road S3 intersection and turn north. Turn left on Borrego Springs Road. Turn left on Palm Canyon Dr. to the visitor center for Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. The auto route skirts around the park to rejoin the historic route at Bautista Canyon. From the visitor center, turn left on Montezuma Grande/County Road S22. Where county Roads S22 and S2 intersect, continue west on S2, and at the intersection of S2 with CA 79, turn north on CA 79 to Riverside county.

Hiking/Biking Ideas

At Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, a short segment of hiking trail exists in the southeast section of the park and passes near the *San Gregorio* marker. In the northwest section, a trail parallels Anza's route through Coyote Canyon and contains markers for several Anza campsites. Due to the intense heat, the trails are best enjoyed in Spring and Fall and with ample drinking water.



An ocotillo plant in Borrego Springs welcomes you to the Anza-Borrego Desert

Photo: Ron Ory

Desert Trek

From Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs, take Borrego Springs Rd. north to the Galleta Meadows Anza Memorial Plaque. Take the Henderson Canyon Rd. turnoff east to the Horse Camp. Continuing to Di Giorgio Rd., the paved road ends, but off-road vehicles can proceed to the gate at Middle Willows. Hikers, bikers and equestrians can go further to Upper Willows and camps in Riverside County. The trail along the Coyote Creek is often closed to protect the fragile ecosystem of the Bighorn Sheep (Borrego) that give the park its name, so check with the Park's Visitor Center for details and updates.

About Your Visit to San Diego County

The expedition followed the San Felipe Creek (and Wash) from the marsh at San Sebastián to the Borrego Sink. Their horses and mules exhausted, some people continued on foot, and often there were two or three children on a horse. They opened wells at the Borrego Sink and continued onward under intense cold. Following the Coyote Creek, they passed into today's Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and encountered people of the Cahuilla tribes.

Sites of Interest

A. Ocotillo Wells and Expedition Camps #50 and #51

After camping along a portion of the San Felipe Wash, they passed through a gap in the clay hills on December 19, 1775. Anza called the previous night's camp (at the Wash) *Los Puertecitos*, or the Little Passes. It is commemorated with California Historic Landmark No. 635, located on state highway 78, 1.6 miles east of the town of Ocotillo Wells. Nearby, the Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area has a marked trail that allows hikers to explore the area. Continuing northwest, Camp #51 was at *San Gregorio*, and is probably today's Borrego Sink located on another portion of the Wash about four miles southeast of the Borrego Valley airport. To the northwest of the airport, a peak named Font's Point can be seen that affords panoramic vistas of the expedition's path (access off of S-22).

B. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Expedition Camps #52 and #53

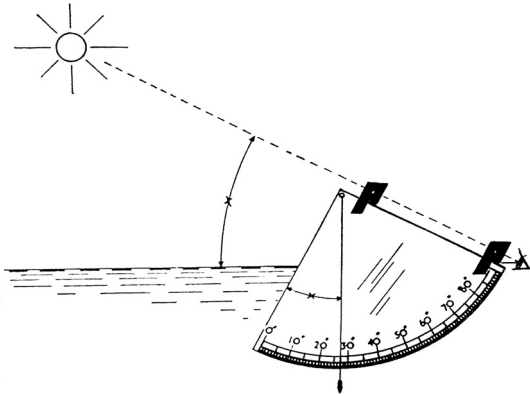
From December 20 to 22, 1775, Camp #52 was made along the Coyote Creek at *El Vado* (The Ford). With plentiful water from the creek and a little pasturage nearby, the animals recovered and the colonists could rest. The site is within Anza-Borrego Desert State Park (33° 20.6'N, 116° 23.6'W), six miles northwest of Borrego Springs at the entrance to the Horse Camp. A short distance to the east is the Desert Gardens portion of the park created by the Anza-Borrego Foundation. Traveling up the creek and canyon, the expedition's next camp (#53) was at *Santa Catarina*, situated at Lower Willows (33° 22.28'N, 116° 26.38'W). The campsites are both marked with California Historic Landmark plaques. The park itself is the largest California State Park, and contains two stretches of Anza's route. These trails provide a rare opportunity to precisely follow in the footsteps of the expedition surrounded by terrain that has changed little since Anza's passage. Portions of the park's trails are open to 4-wheel drive vehicles from the south and north, but closed at Middle Willows, so there is no through-driving. The park's Visitor Center (200 Palm Canyon Dr., Borrego Springs) features interpretive exhibits on the desert environment and the local Native tribe.

C. Presidio of San Diego and Mission San Diego de Alcalá (Camp #67)

Although not an official part of the National Historic Trail, Anza, Font and a group of soldiers diverted here to offer their assistance after the expedition reached Mission San Gabriel (near Los Angeles). Members of the *Kumeyaay* (KumeYAAY) tribe had revolted, killing a priest and had burned the Mission San Diego. While there (January 11-February 8), Font used his *quadrant* to measure the altitude of the Sun and thus determine the latitude of the San Diego Presidio (32°44.5'N). Such readings, taken throughout the journey, were amazingly accurate and can be verified today using modern electronic Global Positioning Systems.

Learning On The Trail in San Diego County

Questions on the Trail



Drawing: Maritime Museum, San Diego

Font's quadrant was a protractor with a viewing tube on one side and a string (and weight) that pointed directly to the ground. From the angle of the sun in the sky and the date, the latitude was determined. On September 29, 1775, Father Font writes, "...with the *astro-nomical* Quadrant of

the expedition...I calculated the latitudes by some tables...And finally, for the satisfaction of experts, in all the observations which I made, I shall record the meridian altitude of the lower limb of the sun which the quadrant showed according to the horizontal wire of its glass."

Question: When you are in the desert, why would it be especially important to know exactly where you are and where you are going? What is a Global Positioning System?



On the CD: Santa Catarina Springs

The *Springs and Coyote Creek* (listen to this track at the beginning of the audio file for Riverside County). Anza and the colonists followed the Coyote Creek upstream along banks covered in cattails and willows. Near Camp #52 (December 21 and 22, 1775), women of the Cahuilla tribe fled when they saw the expedition, leaving their belongings. Anza returned the items when others of their tribe returned later. Camp #53 was at the springs itself, the major source of the creek. Coyotes (*Canis latrans*), bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) and other animals still depend upon this creek, and can find their way to it to drink and find food.

Photo: Greg Smestad

Additional Resources

Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area – 172 Highway 78, P.O. Box 360, Borrego Springs, CA 92004; tel.: 760-767-5391, web: ohv.parks.ca.gov

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park – 200 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs, CA 92004; tel.: 760-767-5311, web: parks.ca.gov

Anza-Borrego Foundation P.O. Box 2001, 595 Palm Canyon Drive, Suite A, Borrego Springs, CA 92004; tel.: 760-767-0446, web: theabf.org

San Diego Presidio Site and Junipero Serra Museum – 2727 Presidio Drive, Presidio Park San Diego, CA 92138; tel.: 619-297-3258, web: sandiegohistory.org

Mission San Diego de Alcalá – 10818 San Diego Mission Rd., San Diego, CA 92108; tel.: 619-281-8449, web: missionsandiego.com

The Nautical Almanac, Astronomical Applications Department, U.S. Naval Observatory – 3450 Massachusetts Avenue NW Washington, DC 20392; tel.: 202-762-1617, web: http://aa.usno.navy.mil/

Celestial Observation Handbook and Ephemeris 310 E. 6th Street; Rolla, MO, 65401; tel.: 573-364-6362, web: rollanet.org/~eksi