

2/27/00 Blair Valley Hike to "Yaquitepec", the Marshal South Cabin

On Feb. 27th, with eleven men present, we did three hikes (one medium length and two "short" ones): the 1st hike was to Marshal South Cabin (Schad's book: Area D-8, Trip 4, p. 305), the 2nd hike was to the Morteros Wash, between Pictograph Trail and Marshal South Cabin, and the 3rd hike was Pictograph Trail (Area D-8, Trip 5, pp.306-307).

This page has photos of the hike to Marshal South Cabin, which is about a 2 mile roundtrip hike, with a 400' elevation gain/loss. Roundtrip hike time is about 2-2 1/2 hrs. Marshal South and his wife lived atop the remote mountaintop from 1931 to the mid-'40s, raising 3 children in an adobe cabin called "Yaquitepec", much like the prehistoric Indians of that region. The ruins of Yaquitepec are today one of Anza-Borrego's noted attractions. From the roadend parking area, a trail climbs in switchbacks up the rocky slope, and turns east along the ridge to the Yaquitepec site. Little remains of the dwelling except some of the walls and the water cistern, but the view from the site is awesome.



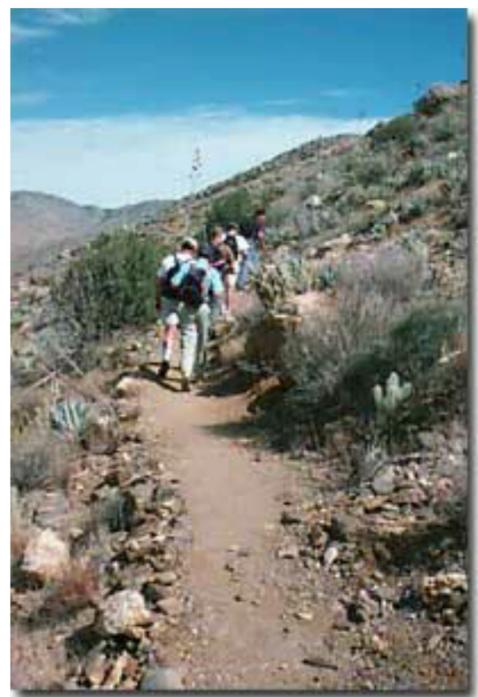
Staging area at the entrance to Blair Valley, 0.5 mi off the Anza-Borrego Desert S2 highway at mile 22.9. (Park entrance fees are \$5 per vehicle.)



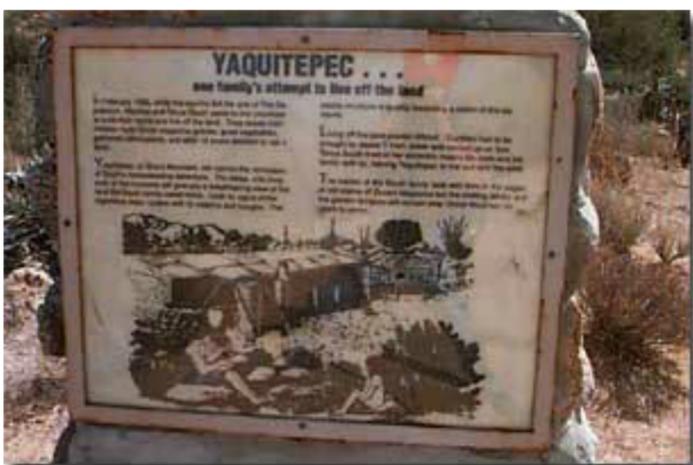
Driving in another 3-4 miles on dirt road, we arrived at the parking area and trail head to Marshal South Cabin. The trail zig-zags up the hillside in the background, then cuts off up to the left, just over the ridge line.



Group shot before heading up the trail to an exceptional view, over lunch, of the desert & snow-capped Mt. Laguna to the west.



Under near-perfect weather conditions, we head up the trail. Ocotillo, cholla and beavertail cactus blanket the terrain, along with sage and Pinyon Juniper. When Marshal South lived here, he had to pack in all his supplies and water (when rainfall didn't provide enough) along this trail..... for a family of 5.



A sign at the trailhead attests to the challenges that the Marshal South family had to endure to live off the land here. (And you think YOU'VE got it rough, without a cable modem hook-up for your home computer, etc.)



With the top almost in sight, Joel, Michael, Jason, Hunter and Miguel take a breather to catch the view. Agaves grow among the boulders here, while pinyon junipers add green to the desert landscape.



Some cabin framework and adobe foundations, a rusty bedspring and water cisterns are about all that remains of "Yaquitepec" in the year 2000. But it doesn't take much to imagine the primitive and isolated existence of those who once lived here some 60 years ago.



Lunch break, just a few boulder hops from the cabin remains. Looking west across the desert, lies snow-capped Mt. Laguna peaks, where future hikes await us. (Officially, 6220' Stephenson Peak and 6271' Monument Peak are in the center, while 5900' Garnet Peak lies to the far right. All are along the Pacific Crest Trail, which passes over the mountain ridge line and stretches from the Mexican border to the Canadian border.)