



Hiking in the Cactus Forest Rincon Mountain District

Visitor Center (520) 733-5153

To Preserve and Protect	Leave all plants, animals, rocks and other natural and historic features undisturbed.	Dispose of trash properly. Trash cans are available at both picnic areas and the visitor center.
	Hiking groups are limited to a maximum of eighteen people.	Aluminum recycling bins are available at the visitor center.
	Off trail hiking or horseback riding is prohibited within the Cactus Forest, except in washes.	Camping is not permitted in the Cactus Forest area of the park.
	Fires are prohibited in the Cactus Forest area of the park, except for charcoal cooking fires in the Mica View and Javelina Picnic Areas.	Pets are not allowed on any trail within Saguaro National Park. Firearms are prohibited in the park.

Safety Tips	Be prepared! Carry and drink at least one gallon of water per person, per day. Sport drinks and snacks are also strongly recommended.	Be alert while hiking. Watch for cactus and other prickly plants. To avoid negative encounters with wildlife, always maintain a safe distance and treat them with respect. Be especially alert for Africanized bees, rattlesnakes, mountain lions and black bears. Avoid getting lost by carrying a map and staying on established trails at all times.
	Dress appropriately for the weather! Long pants and long sleeved shirts are recommended. Always wear a hat and sturdy closed-toe hiking shoes. Apply sunscreen liberally and often.	

Wilderness Access	The Tanque Verde Ridge and Douglas Spring Trails are the most commonly used access points into the Saguaro Wilderness Area. Camping permits are required for all overnight stays within Saguaro National Park.	Permits may be purchased by fax, through the mail or in person at the visitor center. A brochure outlining the rules and regulations for the Saguaro Wilderness Area is available at the Rincon Mountain District visitor center.
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Easy Trails Along the Cactus Forest Drive

Desert Ecology Trail (1/4 mile round trip on paved trail)

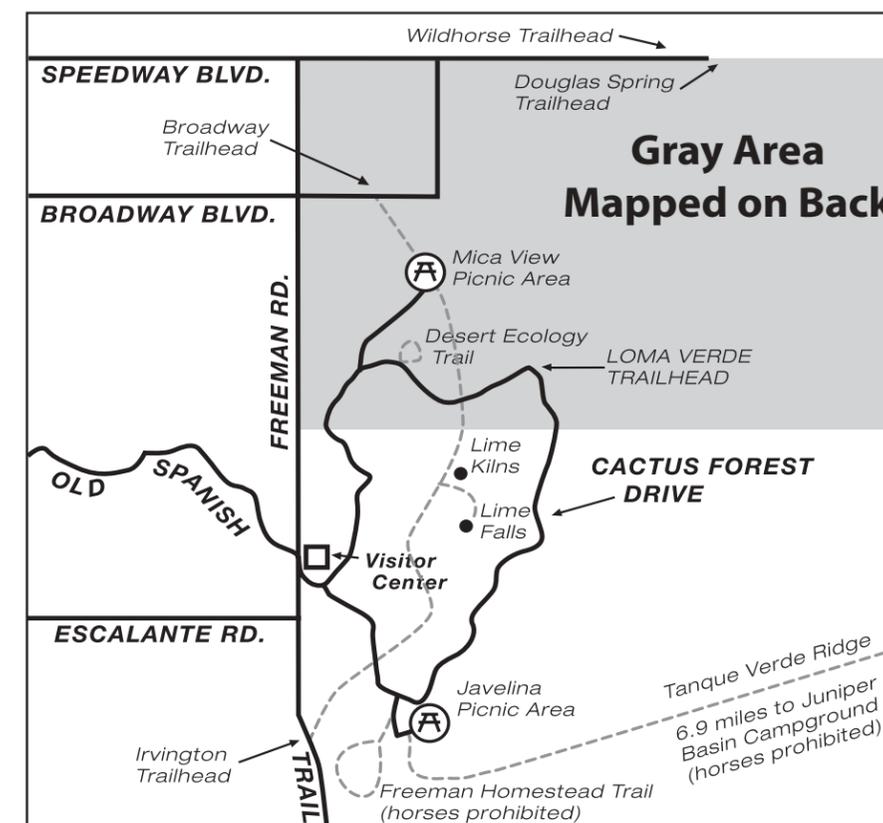
An easy stroll through the desert beside Javelina Wash. Signs along the way will introduce you to the plants and animals that call the Sonoran Desert “home”. This trail is wheelchair accessible.

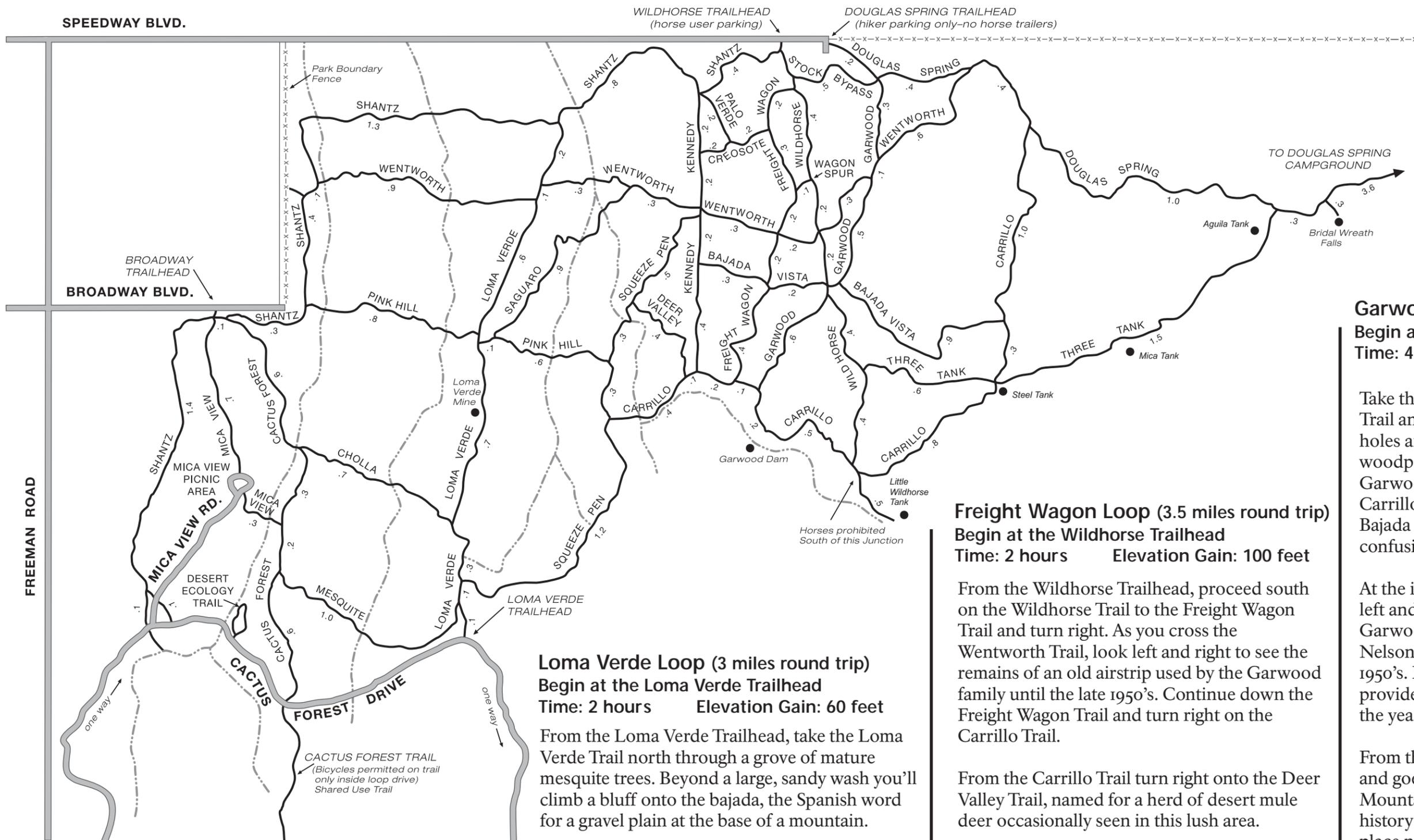
Freeman Homestead Trail (1 mile round trip)

Wander down this path to an old homestead site and a grove of large saguaros, including a thirty-armed giant. Interpretive signs along the way will take you deeper into the meaning of this “home in the desert.” The signs also suggest special exploration activities for youngsters.

Cactus Forest Trail (2.5 mile one way inside loop drive)

For an easy walk, head out on this multi-use trail (hikers, livestock and bicycles) to the lime kilns historic site. Starting from the north trailhead, it is a 2 mile round trip walk; from the south trailhead 3 miles round trip. This 2.5 mile section of the Cactus Forest Trail is the only trail within Saguaro National Park designated for bicycle use. Be courteous and share the trail with others.





LEGEND

— TRAILS

— ROADS

- - - WASHES

Numbers represent trail distance in miles



Mica View Loop (2 miles round trip)
Begin at the Mica View Picnic Area
Time: 1 hour Elevation Gain: None

From the Mica View Picnic Area, go north on the Mica View Trail. Look carefully to see many young saguaros under their palo verde “nurse trees”. Turn right on the Shantz Trail and another quick right on the Cactus Forest Trail then head south. This area offers good views of Tanque Verde Peak and Mica Mountain. Return to your starting point, Mica View Picnic Area, by turning right on the Mica View Trail.

Loma Verde Loop (3 miles round trip)
Begin at the Loma Verde Trailhead
Time: 2 hours Elevation Gain: 60 feet

From the Loma Verde Trailhead, take the Loma Verde Trail north through a grove of mature mesquite trees. Beyond a large, sandy wash you’ll climb a bluff onto the bajada, the Spanish word for a gravel plain at the base of a mountain.

Turn right on the Pink Hill Trail and climb to the top of Pink Hill for a panoramic view of the cactus forest and the Rincon and Catalina Mountains.

Hike east from Pink Hill, then turn right at the Squeeze Pen Trail and head south. The name of this trail recalls the days of cowboys herding cattle into pens for branding.

At the junction with the Loma Verde Trail turn left to return to the Loma Verde Trailhead.

Freight Wagon Loop (3.5 miles round trip)
Begin at the Wildhorse Trailhead
Time: 2 hours Elevation Gain: 100 feet

From the Wildhorse Trailhead, proceed south on the Wildhorse Trail to the Freight Wagon Trail and turn right. As you cross the Wentworth Trail, look left and right to see the remains of an old airstrip used by the Garwood family until the late 1950’s. Continue down the Freight Wagon Trail and turn right on the Carrillo Trail.

From the Carrillo Trail turn right onto the Deer Valley Trail, named for a herd of desert mule deer occasionally seen in this lush area.

From the Deer Valley Trail, turn right on the Squeeze Pen Trail and follow it to the Kennedy Trail. Turn left on the Kennedy Trail, which was once a road built by the county in the 1960’s for a proposed housing development.

To complete the loop, turn right onto the Shantz Trail, which honors Homer Shantz, past President of the University of Arizona and one of the people responsible for the creation of Saguaro National Park. Just beyond a thicket of mesquite trees lies the Wildhorse Trailhead.

Garwood Loop (5.3 miles round trip)
Begin at the Douglas Spring Trailhead
Time: 4 hours Elevation Gain: 730 feet

Take the Douglas Spring Trail to the Garwood Trail and turn right. Watch for saguaros with holes and the birds that make them: Gila woodpeckers and gilded flickers. Stay on the Garwood Trail all the way south to the Carrillo Trail, taking care at the junctions with Bajada Vista and Wildhorse Trails as it can be confusing for those new to the trail system.

At the intersection with the Carrillo Trail, turn left and head toward the location of the old Garwood Ranch. On the slope below the trail, Nelson Garwood built a home in the late 1950’s. Be sure to visit the nearby dam which provided a reliable water supply throughout the year.

From the Garwood dam, the path bears left and goes into the foothills of the Rincon Mountains. Although this area has a long history of cattle grazing, and many trail and place names reflect this history, the last grazing lease in the park expired in 1979.

Remain on the Carrillo Trail to the steel tank at Rock Spring. The goldfish were stocked by cowboys to discourage algae growth in the tank. Find the trail sign in the wash below and follow the Carrillo Trail north toward the Douglas Spring Trail.

To complete the loop, turn left on the Douglas Spring Trail and descend 1 mile to the Douglas Spring Trailhead.