

EL MIRAGE

Off-Highway Vehicle Area



Junior Ranger Activity Guide

Barstow Field Office



Seymour

ANTELOPE

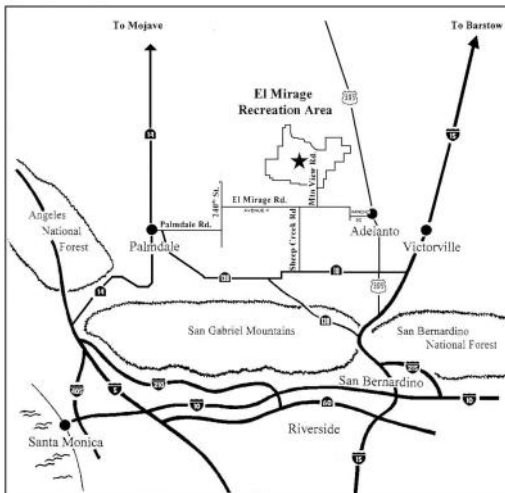
BLM YOUTH MASCOT





Be a Junior Ranger

Junior Rangers play an important role in the El Mirage Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area.



Dear Adults,

We are delighted that you are joining our Junior Ranger Program. The activities in this book offer a special opportunity to explore the El Mirage OHV Area safely and responsibly. The goal of the BLM Junior Ranger Program is to educate children about proper outdoor recreation use with an emphasis on OHV safety, while instilling a strong ethic for natural resources.

Activities are recommended for children ages 6 –12. The goal is for the child to learn by doing. Please read the introduction to each activity and discuss it with the child to be sure he/she understands it. If you need assistance with an activity, feel free to ask a park staff member.

Be sure to complete the Junior Ranger Enrollment Form at the end of this activity guide to receive program updates and activities.

- **Responsible Recreation**

Junior Rangers have fun at El Mirage! They follow the motto of “Safety First, Every Ride, Every Time” in an effort to reduce crashes and injuries resulting from inappropriate OHV use.

- **Natural Resource Protection**

Junior Rangers help BLM Park Rangers preserve the natural resources of El Mirage by learning how to protect plants and wildlife while they are traveling through the desert.

- **Environmental Education**

Junior Rangers teach their family and friends about the El Mirage Area and how to be safe and responsible.

How to Become a Junior Ranger

- Attend ONE ranger education program at El Mirage. Check with park staff or the Friends of El Mirage website (www.elmirage.org) for program schedules. The activities “What Does a Park Ranger Do?” (page 3) and the ATV Safety Institute (ASI) *ATV Rider Course* (see note below) count as education programs.
- (6-8 year-olds) complete at least three activities in this book
- (9-12 year-olds) complete at least five activities in this book
- Complete one stewardship project (A stewardship project is where you help take care of the park. See page 13).
- When you complete the activities listed above, take it to the visitor center and ask a visitor center staff member to review this book with you. Repeat the Junior Ranger Pledge after the El Mirage staff.

Fill in Educational Programs Completed:

#1

Name of Program	Date	Ranger Signature
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#2

Name of Program	Date	Ranger Signature
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Junior Ranger Safety Tips

P - Prepare yourself and your equipment for the trip. Make sure you have parental supervision.

L - Let someone know where you're going and when you will return.

A - Adverse weather or fire conditions? Check first.

N - Never go out on the trail alone.

Take an OHV Safety Course. If you are under 18 years old and plan to ride an OHV, you should take a safety training course. In this course you will learn laws and safety skills, and necessary safe riding habits. You will also learn about the OHV, so you can conduct “pre-ride” safety checks. To register for a State Certified Safety Course contact the following; for ATV riders call the ATV Safety Institute at (800) 887-2887; for off-highway motorcycle riders call (877) 288-7093.

ATV training is free to youth 16 and younger. Safety First, Every Ride, Every Time!!

What Does a Park Ranger Do?

Being a park ranger is an exciting job. Park rangers make sure the park is safe, protect wildlife habitats, and teach people about interesting animals and plants in the park. Find a park ranger and interview them. Ask them these questions.

Name of Park Ranger:

- 1) What do you like best about being a park ranger?
- 2) What is the most difficult part of being a park ranger?
- 3) What is something strange or something funny that you have seen in the park?
- 4) What is your favorite time of year in the park and why?
- 5) What did you have to do to become a park ranger?

"The best part of my job is that it is never the same. One day I might be monitoring trail cameras, and the next day I might be teaching kids about the wonders of the desert, and one day I might be working at a race."

Park Ranger Art Basulto



Safety First, Every Ride, Every Time

While you complete the activities in this booklet, make sure you follow our Junior Ranger motto of “Safety First, Every Ride, Every Time” by modeling appropriate OHV behavior and wearing your personal protective equipment **Every Ride, Every Time!**

Safety Gear – Seven for Safety

1. **A HELMET** is your most important piece of equipment. Select an approved helmet that fits snugly and can be securely fastened. Helmets protect the head in two ways:
 - a. Outer shell resists penetration and abrasion,
 - b. Inner shell absorbs shock by slowly collapsing under impact.

Full face helmets protect your face as well as your head. Open helmets are lighter and cooler and should be used with mouth protection. Encourage the use of full face helmets.

Helmets must be approved by one of the following:

DOT	Department of Transportation
SNELL	Snell Memorial Foundation (most stringent)
ANSI	American National Standards Institute.

2. **EYE PROTECTION** should be worn with all helmets to protect eyes from branches, rocks, dust, or bugs. Eye protection includes goggles or a face shield on your helmet. Sunglasses are not proper eye protection and may shatter or fall off if impacted. Ski goggles are acceptable OHV eye protection.
3. **A LONG-SLEEVE SHIRT** prevents scrapes, burns, bug bites and brush rubs.
4. **PANTS** prevent scrapes, burns, and brush rubs. Although leather, denim, or corduroy pants are fine, synthetic riding pants are the most durable and are available in many riding shops.
5. **GLOVES** protect hands during a fall and also keep fingers warm. Synthetic riding gloves provide a better grip. Fingerless gloves are not suitable for OHV riding. Motorcycle gloves are the best; they are curved for the most comfort and best grip.
6. **BOOTS** must go over the ankle. Suitable boots may include over-the-ankle hiking boots; however, the best, most comfortable, and safest boots are those that are specifically designed for riding.
7. **BODY ARMOR** (neck brace, chest protector, kidney belt) is strongly recommended for both beginners and experienced riders. Beginners take heed and remember that experienced riders have learned the hard way to wear this additional safety gear for their own protection.



Activity 1

Senses Ride

All Ages

Take a ride on any of the park's trails (following the Jr. Ranger Safety Tips of course!) and use your senses to discover the natural world around you (you can park your ATV and hike as well). Listed below are four of our five senses: sight, sound, smell and touch. We have not included taste in this activity because *some of the plants in the park might be harmful if eaten!* Use each one of your senses to learn about something along the trail and describe it below.



Example:

Sight: I saw some animal tracks in the sand near a burrow.



Sight:



Sound:



Smell:












Touch:

Activity 2

Wildlife Detective

All Ages

Hit the trails and explore El Mirage to see what wildlife you may encounter. Many animals are shy. We sometimes find clues that they leave behind in their habitat. Check off the clues below as you find them. Walk quietly, listen closely and stay alert. You never know what animal may cross your path. Don't put your hands or feet in areas where you cannot see such as on a ledge or in a crevice. Use caution when you pick up rocks or debris where a rattlesnake may be hiding!! Good luck wildlife detective!

<input type="checkbox"/>	 Leaf chewed by an insect	<input type="checkbox"/>	Animal tracks 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Insect buzzing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scat (droppings) 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Bird tracks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spider Web 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Animal burrow	<input type="checkbox"/>	A nest in a tree 
<input type="checkbox"/>	 A feather	<input type="checkbox"/>	

EXTRA:

Now sketch the most interesting sign of wildlife you found today in the empty box above. Thanks for the hard work detective!

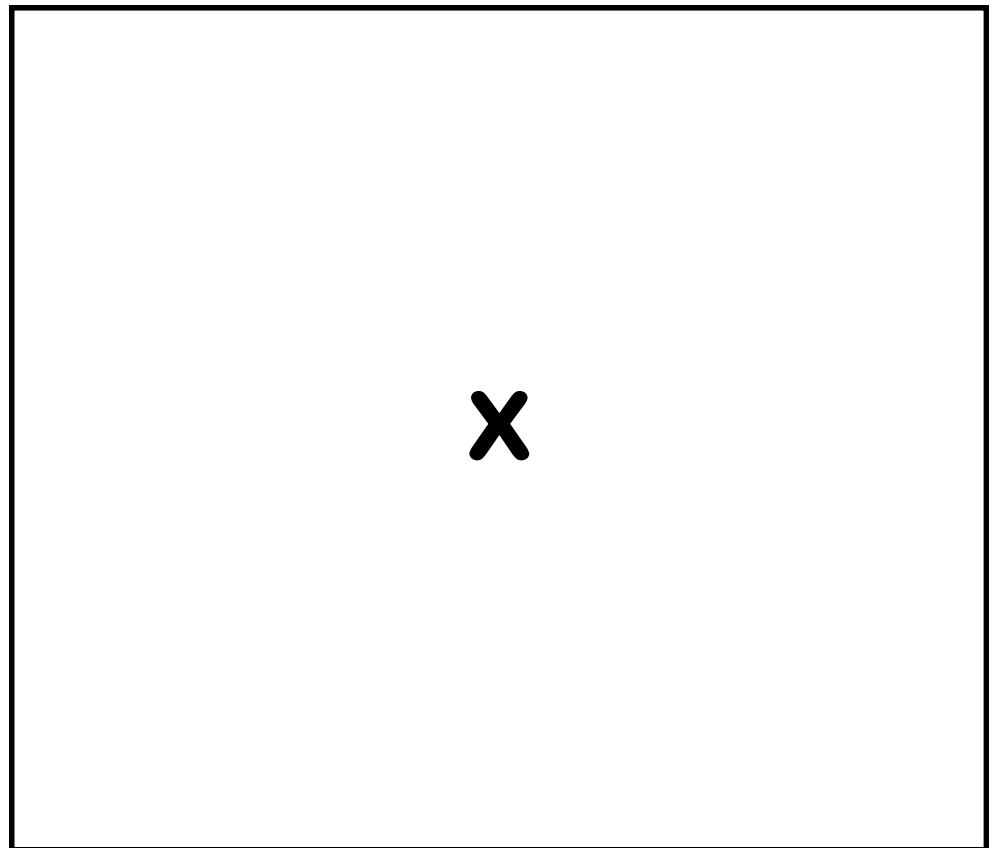
Activity 3

Make A Sound Map

All Ages

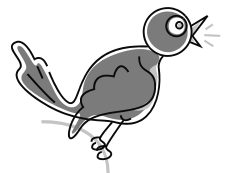
Find a comfortable and quiet place to sit outdoors. The X in the center of the map is you! Listen carefully to the sounds around you. Listen for the birds, animals, wind, and even sounds made by people. Now draw pictures on the map showing the sounds you heard and where you heard them.

Motorcycle



***Did you hear sounds
coming from all directions?***

Bird Singing



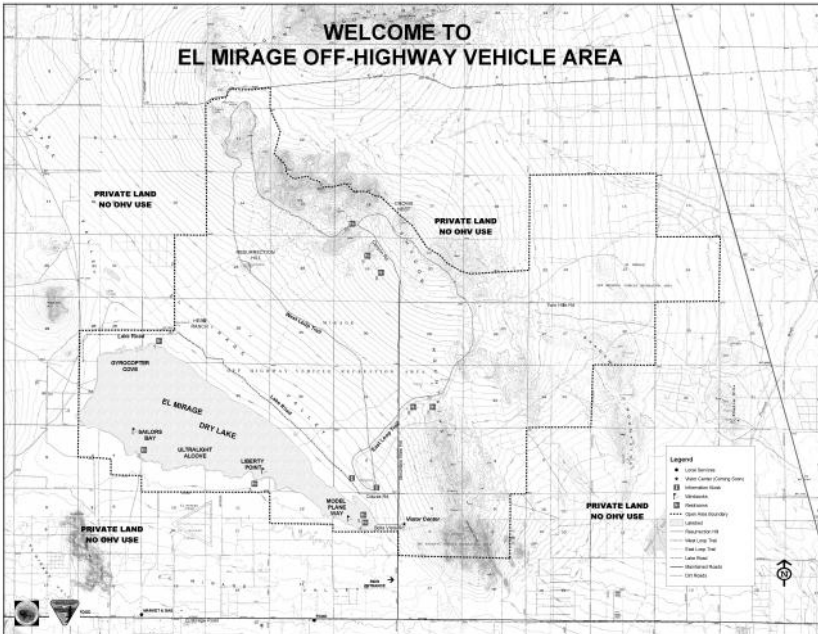
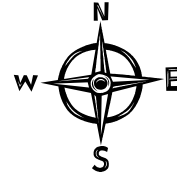
EXTRA:

Did you know all of the sounds, or were there some sounds you could not identify?
Would your map look different if you sat here at night or very early in the morning?

Activity 4

Map It Out

Ages 9-12



Get a copy of the El Mirage map and take a close look at it. Use the map legend to find the trails, campsites, landmarks, and roads. Find a special spot on the map that you think would be interesting to visit. Make sure it is someplace that you have time to visit and that there is a safe way to get there. Also mark your campsite in case you get lost!!

What is it? (example: Sailor's Bay, Resurrection Hill)

How can you get to this special place? Write directions. What roads or trails would you drive on? Where would you park? Would you need to hike?

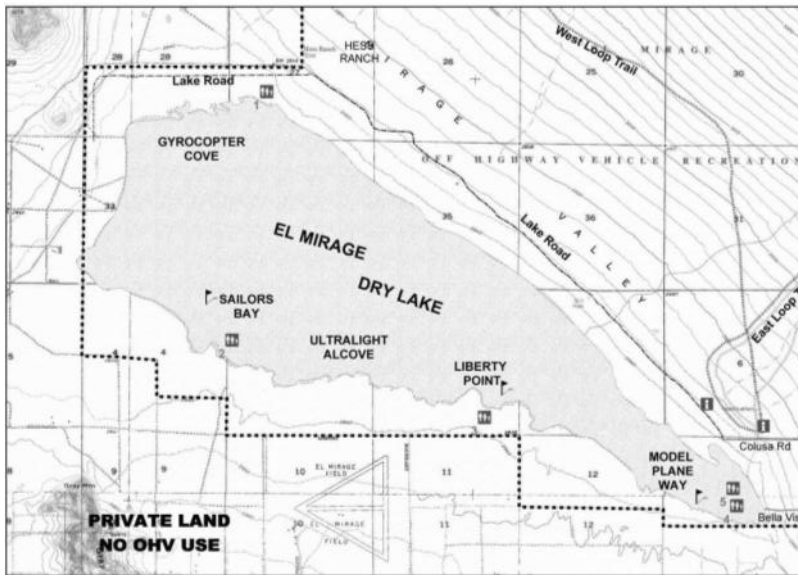
Go find your special place (following the Jr. Ranger Safety Tips of course!). What are your first impressions of your spot? How does being at your spot make you feel?

Write about your spot below:

Activity 5

Who Plays Where?

Ages 9-12



Because of its unique flat surface, the El Mirage Lakebed is a popular destination spot. Visitors enjoy operating motorcycles, ATVs, trucks, cars, buggies, land yachts, model airplanes, model rockets, ultra-light aircraft, gyrocopters, parasails, and full-sized aircrafts. In this activity you can sketch pictures of the diverse recreation opportunities in El Mirage. You can also use a camera to take pictures and then paste some of your pictures to make a collage.

Beware of vegetation surrounded by small sand dunes (dunie bushes) and cracks caused by changes in the lakebed (stress cracks). These can be deadly for OHV riders!!

EXTRA:

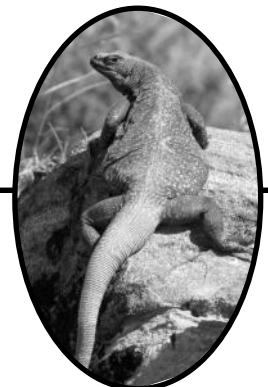
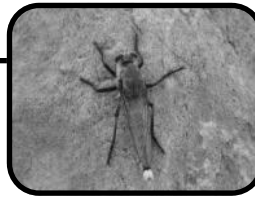
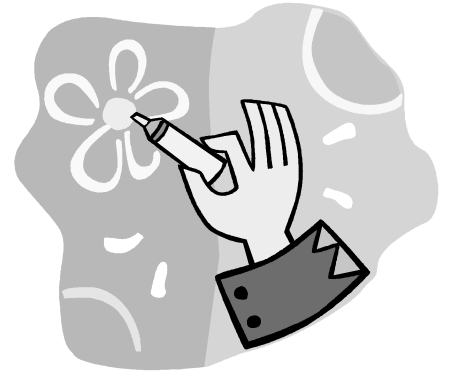
Ask a park ranger to find out who has the right of way out on the lakebed.

Activity 6

Be A Nature Artist

All Ages

In this activity you can sketch pictures of the natural world in El Mirage. You can also use a camera to take pictures and then paste some of your pictures to make a collage. Sketch or paste at least one picture of an animal and at least one picture of a plant up close. Look for interesting shapes and interesting colors.



Activity 7

What Would You Call It?

All Ages

Sometimes the names we give to plants have to do with how they look. Scientists sometimes name plants after their interesting characteristics. These are called the plant's common name.



This plant is called a Joshua Tree because it appears to be lifting its "arms" to heaven like the biblical prophet Joshua.



This plant is called Salt Bush because of the fact that they retain salt in their leaves

Now it's your turn! Find two interesting plants and observe them closely. Take a photo or sketch them in the box. Then come up with your own creative name for them.





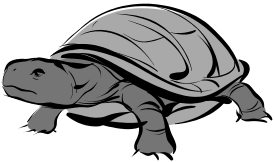


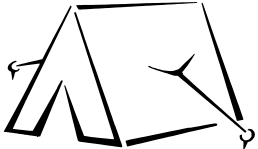



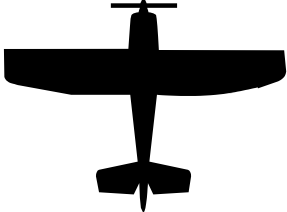




SKETCH OR PHOTO	CREATIVE NAME	DESCRIPTION

Activity 8

Scavenger Hunt Bingo

All Ages

Go on a scavenger hunt in El Mirage. Look for, but don't collect, the items in the boxes below. Remember to leave the plants and rocks where you find them. Place an "X" on the items that you find. Find four in a row down, across or diagonally in order to complete this activity. Can you find them all?

 Insect	 Sign	 Cactus	 Raven
 Tortoise	 Joshua Tree	 Mountains	 Tent
 RV	 Squirrel	 Motorcycle	 Airplane
 Race Car	 Animal Tracks	 Lizard	 Wildflower

Stewardship Project

All Ages

Now that you understand more about the recreation opportunities, plants and wildlife of El Mirage, it's time to do a stewardship project. This is where you do something to make the park a better place for wildlife, plants, and people. Clean up a nearby campground or collect a bag of recyclables. You can bring your bag of recyclables to the visitor center to help support the Junior Ranger Program! Depending on the time of the year, you may be able to participate in one of the major clean ups that we host at El Mirage. Use this space to write about what you did to make a difference.



In Your Own Words

What was your favorite part of your visit to the El Mirage OHV Area? Write about it—or draw a picture—in the space below.



A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing or drawing.

T-Shirt Design Contest

All Ages

Use the space below to draw something you think would make a cool design for our Junior Ranger T-shirt. If your design is selected, it will be given to a graphic design artist for our next batch of Junior Ranger T-shirts!!

Name

Address

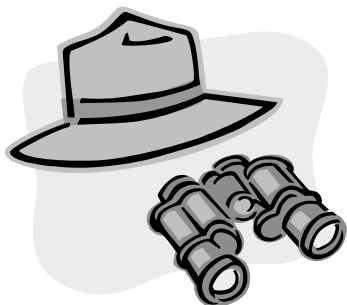
Phone # & Parent Email

Congratulations!

You have completed the Junior Ranger Program. Being a Junior Ranger is fun, but there are responsibilities. You must now take the Junior Ranger Pledge. Raise your right hand, have a park ranger read the Junior Ranger Pledge (on the next page) to you and repeat the pledge after the ranger.



Once you have taken the pledge, the ranger will sign your official Certificate of Achievement and you will receive a goody bag and t-shirt.



You are now an official Junior Ranger!

Junior Ranger Enrollment Form

Optional: Hand this form in when you get your goody bag & t-shirt. You will receive information about special events, updates and activities for Junior Rangers.

Area:

Date:

Junior Ranger Name:

Gender:

Date of Birth:

Grade:

School:

Parent/Guardian:

*Address:

City/State:

Zip:

*Phone

*Email:

County:

* Address, phone number and e-mail will only be used to contact you about opportunities for Junior Rangers.

Office Use Only:

Date Entered:

Certificate of Achievement

Congratulations Junior Ranger!

You play an important role in the management of our public lands.
Thank you for your hard work! Great job!

This certifies that _____ has met
the requirements of a Bureau of Land Management Junior Ranger.

Junior Ranger Pledge

I, (your name), promise to do these things to be safe and protect the desert:

- I will practice “Safety First, Every Ride, Every Time” .
- I will do my part to keep our deserts clean.
- I will stay on the roads and trails when traveling through the desert.
- I will respect, protect, and enjoy our desert.

Park Ranger

Date

Public Lands Belong To You!

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a federal government agency that takes care of more than 245 million acres in the western part of the United States. These public lands belong to all Americans.

The BLM manages public lands for many uses such as recreation, supplying natural resources like minerals, providing rangeland where cattle graze, maintaining natural wildlife habitat, and studying history and science.



This brochure was funded through the California State Parks OHV Recreation Vehicle Program.



Contact Us

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