

## PSOC Spring Overnight Field Trip (*Revised 1/23/26*)

Lone Pine, CA  
April 23-26, 2026



View of Mount Whitney from Lone Pine (photo by Kurt Bayless)



Mobius Arch in Alabama Hills

### Google Link to sign up for the Spring overnight field trip to Lone Pine:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fv8TGG2qn6M8VAdSFB8kdtQecnDwgelaK57Y8d1colc/edit?usp=sharing>

We will be staying three (3) nights at the **Mt. Whitney Motel** from **Thursday-April 23 to Sunday-April 26, 2026**. The motel is located at 305 N. Main Street in Lone Pine, CA.

To reserve a room, please call the hotel's reservation desk at (760) 876-4207. **Be sure to ask for Rahul or Kay Bhakta (owners)** when you make your reservation. Tell them that you're with the Photographic Society of Orange County (PSOC) in order to receive our special room rates. The hotel requires a major credit card to guarantee your reservation. If you decide to cancel your room reservation, your deposit is fully refundable up to 72 hours before the check-in date.

### Room Rates

We've reserved a block of 10 rooms for PSOC members & guests. Check-in is **2:00 pm** and Check-out is **11:00 am**. The motel will hold our block of rooms until **April 15, 2026**. **Don't wait too long to make your reservation - it's a "popular" destination.**

1 Queen bed is \$110.88 per night - **\$332.64 for 3 nights** (taxes included). Four (4) rooms reserved for PSOC.  
1 King bed is \$123.20 per night - **\$369.60 for 3 nights** (taxes included). Four (4) rooms reserved for PSOC.  
2 Queen beds are \$134.40 per night - **\$403.20 for 3 nights** (taxes included). Two (2) rooms reserved for PSOC.

**Thursday Get Together** – Before dinner, let's meet at Dan Anderson's house at 5:00 pm for a social hour, and find out what everyone's plans are for Friday and Saturday. Dan's address is 310 N. Washington St. in Lone Pine (next door to the motel). Dan will be providing snacks and drinks for everyone.

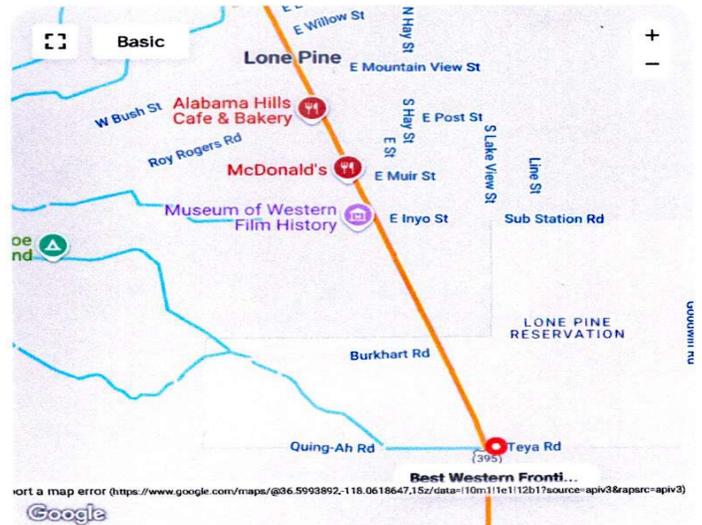
**Friday Group Dinner** – Let's plan to meet at 6:00 pm at **The Grill** located at 446 S. Main St. in Lone Pine, phone # (760) 876-4240. They're open daily from 9:00 am-9:00 pm.

The Mt. Whitney Motel front desk is staffed during limited hours. Limited parking is available onsite. Each room is air-conditioned featuring Smart televisions. Complimentary wireless internet access keeps you connected, and cable programming is available for your entertainment. The rooms include microwave, coffee

maker and refrigerator. Bathrooms feature bathtubs or showers with rainfall showerheads and designer toiletries. When you stay at the Mt. Whitney Motel, you're in downtown and walking distance to shops and restaurants, and the Museum of Western Film History.



Mt. Whitney Motel in Lone Pine



## History of Lone Pine and Alabama Hills

Lone Pine is located in Inyo County, California, located 16 miles south-southeast of Independence. The town is located in the Owens Valley, near the Alabama Hills and Mount Whitney, between the eastern peaks of the Sierra Nevada to the west and the Inyo Mountains to the east. Tunnel Creek Road in the Alabama Hills is a must drive to see the famous '**Mobius Arch**' and many hiking trails.

The town is named after a solitary pine tree that once existed at the mouth of Lone Pine Canyon. On March 26, 1872, a very large earthquake destroyed most of the town of Lone Pine and killed 27 of its 250+ residents.

The Paiute Indians inhabited the Owens Valley area from prehistoric times (up to 10,000 years ago). These early inhabitants are known to have established trading routes which extended to the Pacific Central Coast, delivering materials originating in the Owens Valley to such tribes as the Chumash.

During the 1870s, Lone Pine was an important supply town for several nearby mining communities, including Kearsarge, Cerro Gordo, Keeler, Swansea, and Darwin. The Cerro Gordo mine high in the Inyo Mountains was one of the most productive silver mines in California. The silver was carried in ore buckets on a strong cable to Keeler, and then transported 4 miles northwest to smelter ovens at Swansea. To supply the necessary building materials and fuel for these operations, a sawmill was constructed near Horseshoe Meadows by Colonel Sherman Stevens that produced wood for the smelters and the mines. The wood was moved by flume to Owens Valley, where it was burned in adobe kilns to make charcoal, which was then transported by steamships across Owens Lake to the smelters at Swansea, about 12 miles south of Lone Pine.

Railroads played a major role in the development of Lone Pine and the Owens Valley. In 1883, the Carson and Colorado Railway line (**see photo below**) was constructed from Belleville, Nevada, across the White Mountains to Benton, and then down into the Owens Valley where it ended in Keeler. The arrival of the C&C Railway line, with its engine "The Slim Princess", and the stagecoach in Keeler were a major economic boost for the area. Twice a week, passengers arrived on the evening train, spent the night at the Lake View Hotel (later renamed the Hotel Keeler), and then took the stage the following morning to Mojave. A short line to the north connected with the Virginia and Truckee Railroad line at Mound House, Nevada.

In 1920, the history of Lone Pine was dramatically altered when a movie production company came to the Alabama Hills to make a silent film. Other companies soon discovered the scenic location, and in the coming decades, over 400 films, 100 television episodes, and countless commercials have used Lone Pine and the Alabama Hills as a film location. In the coming decades, Lone Pine and the Alabama Hills continued to be used as the setting for Western films. Through the years, non-Western films also used the unique landscape of the area.



Laws Museum in Bishop (photos by Kurt Bayless)

## MANZANAR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 that required people of Japanese ancestry living along the Pacific coast to be placed into relocation camps. One of these camps, **Manzanar**, was built 9 miles north of Lone Pine. It's the site of one of ten American concentration camps, where more than 120,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II, from March 1942 to November 1945. Although it had over 10,000 inmates at its peak, Manzanar was one of the smaller internment camps. It's located in California's Owens Valley, on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada mountains, between the towns of Lone Pine to the south and Independence to the north.

Manzanar means "apple orchard" in Spanish. The **Manzanar National Historic Site**, which preserves and interprets the legacy of Japanese American incarceration in the United States, was identified by the United States National Park Service as the best-preserved of the ten former campsites.

Since the last of those incarcerated left in 1945, former detainees and others have worked to protect Manzanar and to establish it as a National Historic Site to ensure that the history of the site, along with the stories of those who were incarcerated there, is recorded for current and future generations. The site also interprets the former town of Manzanar, the ranch days, the settlement by the Owens Valley Paiute, and the role that water played in shaping the history of the Owens Valley.



Manzanar National Historic Site (just north of Lone Pine)

## ANCIENT BRISTLECONE PINE FOREST

The **Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest** is a protected area high in the White Mountains in Inyo County in eastern California. The forest is east of the Owens Valley, high on the eastern face of the White Mountains in the upper Fish Lake-Soda Spring Watershed, above the northernmost reach of the Mojave Desert into the Great Basin.

The Great Basin bristlecone pine (*Pinus longaeva*) grows between 9,800 and 11,000 feet above sea level, in xeric alpine conditions, protected within the Inyo National Forest. The limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) also grows in the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest.

The **Methuselah Grove** in the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest is the location of the "Methuselah", a Great Basin bristlecone pine that is **4,857 years old**. It is considered to be the world's oldest known and confirmed living non-clonal organism.



Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest (photos by Kevin Bayless)

## RED ROCK CANYON STATE PARK

The **Red Rock Canyon State Park** features scenic desert cliffs, buttes and spectacular rock formations. The park is located where the southernmost tip of the Sierra Nevada converges with the El Paso Range. Each tributary canyon is unique, with dramatic shapes and vivid colors.

Historically, the area was once home to the Kawaiisu Indians, who left petroglyphs in the El Paso mountains and other evidence of their habitation. The spectacular gash situated at the western edge of the El Paso mountain range was on a Native American trade route for thousands of years. About 1850, it was used by the footsore survivors of the famous Death Valley trek including members of the Arcane and Bennett families along with some of the Illinois Jayhawkers. During the early 1870s, the colorful rock formations in the park served as landmarks for 20-mule team freight wagons that stopped for water. The park now protects significant paleontology sites and the remains of 1890s-era mining operations, and has been the site for a number of Western movies.



Red Rock Canyon State Park (photos by Kurt Bayless)

## FOSSIL FALLS

The **Fossil Falls** is a unique geological feature, located in the Coso Range in Inyo County, California. Volcanic activity in the mountain range, along with meltwater from glaciers in the nearby Sierra Nevada, played a role in the creation of the Falls. It's located near the community of Little Lake, 1.0 mi off US 395 at a red cinder cone called "Red Hill." Turn right on to Cinder Road and watch for the signs to Fossil Falls.

During the last ice age, glaciers formed in the Sierra Nevada. Meltwater from the glaciers pooled into large lakes, including Owens Lake and the Owens River. The river traveled through to Indian Wells Valley, and its course was diverted several times by volcanic activity. The falls were formed when the river was forced to divert its course over a basalt flow, polishing and reshaping the rock into a variety of unique shapes and forms.

All the lava flows at Fossil Falls are basaltic. The Coso Volcanic Field brought flows from the northeast, and later "Red Hill," which released the younger lava. The flows occurred between 10,000 and 400,000 years ago. During this period, the glacial flows would run through Fossil Falls and smooth the vesicular basalt. The erosion found at Fossil Falls was formed by the youngest glacial runoff, called the Tioga, from the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range about 10,000 to 20,000 years ago.



Fossil Falls (photos by Kurt Bayless)



Red Hill Cinder Cone by Little Lake

## CERRO GORDO MINES AND GHOST TOWN

The **Cerro Gordo Mines** are a collection of abandoned mines located in Cerro Gordo in the Inyo Mountains near Lone Pine, California. Mining operations were conducted from 1866 to 1957, producing high grade silver, lead, and zinc ore; and, more rarely, gold and copper.

Some ore was smelted on site, but larger capacity smelters were eventually constructed along the shore of nearby Owens Lake. These smelting operations were the beginnings of the towns of Swansea and Keeler. Most of the metal ingots produced here were transported to Los Angeles. Mining of silver and lead peaked in the early 1880s, with a second mining boom producing zinc in the 1910s.

Home to some 4,700 people during its peak, the site is now a California ghost town.



Cerro Gordo Mines and Ghost Town

**Websites to check out:**

<https://www.visitcalifornia.com/places-to-visit/lone-pine/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossil\\_Falls](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossil_Falls)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cerro\\_Gordo\\_Mines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cerro_Gordo_Mines)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_Rock\\_Canyon\\_State\\_Park\\_%28California%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Rock_Canyon_State_Park_%28California%29)

<https://www.lawsmuseum.org/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient\\_Bristlecone\\_Pine\\_Forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Bristlecone_Pine_Forest)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manzanar>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop,_California)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mono\\_Lake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mono_Lake)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodie,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodie,_California)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mojave,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mojave,_California)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little\\_Lake,\\_Inyo\\_County,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Lake,_Inyo_County,_California)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammoth\\_Lakes,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammoth_Lakes,_California)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobius\\_Arch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobius_Arch)

<https://www.exploratography.com/blog-cal/red-hill-cinder-cone>

<https://the-grill.goto-restaurants.com/#about>