



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

Restoring, Enhancing and Sustaining Forests in California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands

Sierra National Forest

Sierra Vista National Scenic Byway Bass Lake Ranger District

The Byway is a seasonal route as forest roads are blocked by snow and roads are not plowed or maintained during winter months. The Byway is generally open from June through October. Call ahead to check road and weather conditions.

Following are some features along the route starting at the Ranger Station in North Fork, proceeding up the Minarets Road north to the Beasore Road, then south to Cold Springs Summit, west to Fresno Dome and Nelder Grove, ending on Highway 41.

THE EXACT CENTER OF CALIFORNIA

After 150 years of debate over the exact geographic center of California, final confirmation was made with the use of Global Positioning System settling the debates. Travel six miles south on Italian Bar Road (Rd. 225) to visit the marker.

REDINGER OVERLOOK (3320')

An outstanding view can be seen of Redinger Lake, the San Joaquin River and the surrounding rugged Sierra foothill country. This area of the San Joaquin River drainage provides a winter home for the San Joaquin deer herd. Deer move out of this area in the hot dry summer months migrating to higher country for food and water.

ROSS CABIN (4000')

Ross Cabin was built in the late 1860s by Jessie Blakey Ross and is one of the oldest standing log cabins in the area. The log cabin displays various designs in foundation construction and log assembly brought to the western United States, exemplifying the pioneer spirit and technology of the mid-nineteenth century.

Access to this area during the nineteenth century was by primitive trail along steep mountainous canyons and ridges. An accessible toilet is available.

MILE HIGH VISTA (5300')

A spectacular view of the Sierra Crest is here including the Minarets, Mount Ritter (13,157'), Mammoth Mountain, Mammoth Pool Reservoir, the San Joaquin River, Balloon Dome and Fuller Buttes. Signs assist with locations of mountain peaks and other outstanding features at the vista. The Ansel Adams, Kaiser and John Muir Wilderness areas can be seen. Picnic tables and accessible toilets are available.

ARCH ROCK (6200')

This granite arch is a unique geological feature resulting from wind and water erosion. The arch may be viewed by walking the short distance to the viewing platform and is well worth the effort. Mount Tom, Kaiser Ridge and the John Muir Wilderness backcountry can be seen.

MINARETS/BEASORE JUNCTION (7000')

Several important locations are accessible from this junction. Two miles to the north, on the edge of the Ansel Adams Wilderness, is Clover Meadow Station. Wilderness permits and information on conditions are available during the summer. Traveling down Beasore Road will take you to the end of the Scenic Byway.

JACKASS MEADOW (7000')

Jackass Meadow is one of the largest meadow complexes in the central Sierra Nevada, providing a stunning summer wildflower display and a favorite picnic spot. Take a short walk along the trail to



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The Minarets along the Sierra crest may be seen in the distance, while the Balls loom above the meadow.

PORTUGUESE OVERLOOK (7200')

This byway stop is on the Beasore road at Portuguese Creek right at the timberline. To the north are the Balls, great glacier carved granite domes. To the south is an expansive vista of Shuteye Ridge and Chiquito basin in a lodgepole pine forest. Above the road is a glimpse of the higher elevation alpine zone offering few or no trees at the upper end of the red fir forest. Durable low growing plants, more adaptable to the short growing season, thrive here.

GLOBE ROCK (7152')

Here is a geological oddity of an improbably large granite sphere perched precariously – appearing to possibly roll away at any moment. It was created by the action of water freezing and thawing on the granite. Globe Rock may be seen from the road but the short walk to view this large boulder up close is well worth it.

The area has been visited for a long time as Mono acorn processing pounding holes are visible in the base rock. President Theodore Roosevelt was photographed here.

BEASORE MEADOW (6800')

Jones' store has been at this location since the early 1900s. Services include meals, supplies, cabins and a campground during the summer.

COLD SPRINGS SUMMIT (7308')

This is the highest point along the Byway. A short walk along the trail to Cold Springs Meadow will unveil a spectacular view of Madera Peak (10,509').

Turning to Fresno Dome to follow the Byway on to Nelder Grove will eventually take you to Highway 41 just north of Oakhurst, about two hours driving time (without stops).

Continuing down Beasore Road will take you to Bass Lake, about 20 minutes.

An accessible toilet is available

FRESNO DOME (7540')

Fresno Dome is a dominant granite dome standing alone above the forest north of Soquel Meadow. The trailhead is a three-mile drive off the byway with a climb to the top providing a panoramic vista. Appropriate footwear is needed. Fresno Dome campground is close by.

NELDER GROVE (5300')

Nelder Grove of Giant Sequoias is located two miles via a dirt road. The designated Historical Area is located in the center of a natural range of *sequoia giganteum*, consisting of over 1500 acres with 106 mature giant sequoias.

On the way to Nelder Grove Campground are several historic replicas and natural features: two restored cabins, life-size replicas of cross-log and two-pole logging chutes, several giant sequoia tree stumps left by the 1890s loggers, and a short walk to the "Big Ed" tree. The "Bull Buck Tree," a contender for the title of the "world's largest tree," has measurements of a height of 246 feet and a ground level circumference of 99 feet. This easy and worthwhile hike begins at the campground.

The three-mile hike to The Graveyard of the Giants reveals several large fire-killed sequoias. Watch for The Granddad and the Grandkids: a single isolated mature tree with one large branch outstretched like a protective arm, under which grow several young sequoias.

The Shadow of the Giants National Recreation Trail is a one-mile, self guided walk along the banks of Nelder Creek. The trail meanders quietly through the forest with giant sequoias greeting travelers along the trail offering peace and solitude.

HELPFUL TIPS:

Services available along this route are very limited. During summer months, Wagner's Store at Mammoth Pool offers a private campground, food and is the **only** facility with gasoline after the town of North Fork.

When traveling any forest roads, be sure to come prepared for a variety of weather conditions. High elevations have summer thunderstorms with varying forms of precipitation.

All Are Welcome

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