Area Description

The vast South McCullough Wilderness covers 44,245 acres, including the southern part of the McCullough Range, which takes center stage through the wilderness. The ridge of ancient metamorphic rock runs north-south and is flanked by steep slopes and rugged canyons to the east and west. The land gradually eases into a gentler slope, with foothills to the west running out across a wide bajada.

With an elevation range from 2,500 feet at the northwest end to 7,026 feet at the summit of the southern end of McCullough Mountain, the wilderness supports a variety of plant and animal life including Mojave yucca, banana yucca, buckhorn cholla, catclaw acacia, Apache plum, blackbrush and Joshua trees. At the higher elevations, you’ll find single-leaf pinyon pine, Utah juniper, California juniper various kinds of cholla, prickly pear cactus, and hedgehog cactus.

Desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, antelope ground squirrels, desert woodrats, jackrabbits, desert tortoise, a variety of lizards and snakes, Gambel’s quail, chukar, red-tailed hawks, northern flickers, and a variety of sparrows may be glimpsed in this wilderness.

Directions

The South McCullough Wilderness is located about 45 miles south of Las Vegas near the Nevada/California border. Powerline Road leads north off of State Route 164/Nipton Road, providing access to the eastern border of the wilderness. Just north of the Jean Airport, dirt roads lead southeast from State Highway 164, providing access at the northwestern edge of the wilderness. Road conditions vary, high-clearance and four-wheel drive are encouraged.

Motorized vehicles, mechanized equipment, and mechanical transport are not permitted in designated wilderness.

Recreation

The South McCullough Wilderness provides a unique and beautiful backdrop for hiking, hunting, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, and camping. Backcountry permits are not required. Camping is limited to a total of 14 days in one location, and no more than 90 days total within any consecutive 12-month period. Hunting and trapping is allowed with proper licensing.

Maps

USGS 7.5 Quadrangle Maps: Roach, McCullough Pass, McCullough Mountain NE, Desert, McCullough Mountain, Highland Spring.

Additional Information

- Recommended group size: 12 members
- No camping is allowed within 300 feet of water sources or fenced enclosures.
- Campfires are allowed in South McCullough Wilderness, except during regional fire restrictions, with use of a fire pan and/or fire blanket. Visitors are encouraged to only use camp stoves.
- Cross country use of recreational riding or pack stock is not permitted except for members of a hunting party in possession of a valid state hunting license and tag, in pursuit of big game and during hunting season.
- Grazing of pack stock animals is not permitted. Feeding is limited to packed in, certified, weed-free feed; pellets are strongly recommended.