Land Corral - Saint David Cienega Area

Visit the Land Corral trailhead for access to the north end of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRnCA), site of the Saint David Cienega, one of the few remaining marshlands along the River. You may also visit the livestock pens where movies have been filmed.

History: The San Pedro River Valley in the Saint David area is home to a number of artesian springs. These attracted Native American farmers in prehistoric times. After Spain’s colonial period, the Mexican government issued the San Juan de Boquillas y Nogales Land Grant here in 1832. Sold to the United States in 1853 as part of the Gadsden Purchase, some areas were settled by United States homesteaders in the 1880s during Arizona’s Territorial period. The land grant was purchased in 1881 by George Hearst, with legal title to the area passing from his family though a chain of transactions until it became part of the SPRnCA in 1988. The Land Corral name refers to the cattle pens that are still here. Hollywood came here to film scenes in John Wayne’s movies Red River in 1946 and McClintock! in 1963.

Today, the Land Corral trailhead offers access to the northern end of the SPRnCA. Trailhead parking at the end of Cary Road connects to foot paths that lead to the Little Joe aquatic habitat refugia and Saint David Cienega wetland. The wetland is in an ancient river oxbow, fed by spring water.

Plan Your Visit: Become familiar with the area and your route. Plan on being self-sufficient. The area is remote, with minimal facilities, and poor cell phone coverage. Bring adequate water. Dress for the weather. Let someone know where you are going and what to do if you do not return on time.

The trailhead access road (South Cary Road) is eroded and is currently not passable by low clearance vehicles and trailers.

The San Pedro Trail has not been improved or maintained south of the cienega.

No picnic facilities or water are available at this site.

Pets must be leashed in all developed facilities and in other posted areas. All dogs must be kept under direct control at all times. Clean up after your dog and pack out the waste.

Camping: Camping is not allowed at the trailhead, parking area, or educational trails to the wetlands. Backcountry camping is allowed 1/2 mile from the trailhead and public roads. A permit is required for camping, available from self-service stations located at most trailheads. There is a $2 per person peer night fee.

No toilet or trash collection facilities are available at the site. Pack out all your trash.

Leave What You Find: Vegetation, archaeological, historical, and paleontological sites and artifacts are protected by federal law. It is illegal to damage, destroy or remove any artifacts or structures found in the SPRnCA. Metal detecting is not permitted.

Respect the private property in this area which is intermingled with public lands. Private land, including the Union Pacific Railroad bed, is not open to public use.

Watch Out for Wildlife: The area is natural habitat for birds, mammal, reptile, and aquatic species; avoid disturbing animals. Do not harm or harass any wildlife.

Hazards include thorny vegetation, falling trees and branches, hidden sink holes, quicksand, steep drop offs, unstable ground, collapsing riverbanks, rattlesnakes, large predators, poisonous insects, extreme temperatures, and flash floods.

Hunting: Hunting with firearms and other weapons is allowed throughout the SPRnCA subject to all Arizona State hunting regulations. Discharge of weapons is not allowed in designated safety zones around developed recreation sites and residential areas adjacent to SPRnCA lands.
Directions: From Benson go south on Highway 80 to Apache Powder Road and Escalante Road about 4.5 miles to Cary Road, and south about 1 mile to the trailhead.

BLM Project Office: 4070 South Avenida Saracino, Hereford, AZ 85615
Tucson Field Office: 3201 East Universal Way, Tucson, AZ 85756
https://www.blm.gov/office/tucson-field-office
(520) 258-7200; Email: blm_az_ffoweb@blm.gov

Friends of the San Pedro River:
http://sanpedroriver.org/wpfspr/
9800 E. Highway 90, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635-9173
(520) 508-4445; Email: fspr@sanpedroriver.org