

# Machesna Mountain Wilderness

## Santa Lucia Ranger District

### Los Padres National Forest

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#### Welcome to the Machesna Mountain Wilderness!

Pine-crowned peaks. Majestic rocky crags. Views of the snow-capped Sierras. These may be found in the Machesna Mountain Wilderness. The 20,000 acre wilderness became part of our National Wilderness System in 1984. Chaparral, oak woodlands, and conifer forests blanket its rugged terrain. The Wilderness also contains a 1500 acre Research Natural Area, dedicated to the study of a unique strain of Coulter pine. Prairie falcon and tule elk make their home in the undisturbed landscape. Only 25 miles from San Luis Obispo, a unique wilderness experience awaits you!

#### Wilderness Ethic

What is wilderness? A quote from the Wilderness Act of 1964 sums it up neatly: "Where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation. Please help preserve this experience for others by minimizing your impact on the land. You can do this by:

- ★ Packing out all trash.
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- ★ We encourage camping in Forest Service developed recreation sites.
- ★ Use low impact camping outside of developed areas.
- ★ Burying all human waste 6 to 8 inches deep, 100 feet from water.
- ★ Staying on the trail.
- ★ Keeping streams and pools clean.
- ★ Respecting plant and animal life.

#### Wilderness Safety Tips-No 911 Here.

- ★ Let others know your travel schedule and route.
- ★ Travel with a companion to make your trip both safe and enjoyable.
- ★ Plan ahead. Have water, topographic maps, a first aid kit, and other necessities.
- ★ Watch for poison oak, rattlesnakes, and ticks.
- ★ Local water sources must be boiled or filtered for safe drinking.

#### Mountain Bike And OHV Users: Caution

Motorized and mechanized vehicles are not permitted within the wilderness boundary. This restriction includes mountain bikes.

#### Wilderness Fire Use

Developed recreation site: an area which has been improved or developed for recreation. All sites have a Forest Service fire ring or stove.

- ★ A campfire permit is not needed to build a wood fire or use a stove in a developed recreation site.
- ★ When in a developed site, you must use the Forest Service fire ring or stove, or you may place your stove next to the fire ring. This is to provide for your safety and to minimize impacts on the land.
- ★ You will need a campfire permit at any time of the year to build a wood fire or use a portable stove outside a developed recreation site.
- ★ Campfire permits are available free-of-charge at any Forest Service district office or the Forest Supervisor's office.
- ★ If you are planning to enter a Wilderness area, we suggest you obtain a campfire permit, so that if all developed sites are occupied, you may camp and use a stove or fire outside a developed site.
- ★ When fire danger reaches a very high level, fire restrictions are placed in effect. When fire restrictions are in effect you may use: gas, jellied petroleum, or pressurized liquid fuel stoves only. NO wood fires permitted outside a developed recreation site. To find out if fire restrictions are in effect, call the Santa Lucia Ranger District Office at (805) 925-9538.
- ★ Have a shovel available at the campfire site for preparing and extinguishing campfires. Extinguish campfire with water, using the "drown, stir, and feel" method.
- ★ Smoking is restricted to developed recreation sites, or areas that are at least 3 feet in diameter and cleared of all flammable materials.

#### Camping

There is one Forest Service developed recreation site in the Machesna Mountain Wilderness.

**Pine Springs:** located in a mountain-top pine grove. It has a watering trough for stock, a wilderness toilet, and a fire ring. To help prevent damage to pine trees, please keep stock tied to a line between the trees.

#### Trails:

**American Canyon Trail (1603):** A 5 mile hike of moderate difficulty. The trail starts in the oak woodlands of the American Canyon Campground. It gradually climbs 1700 feet along brush-covered mountain slopes. Passing through scattered groves of oak and pine, it ends in the shady Pine

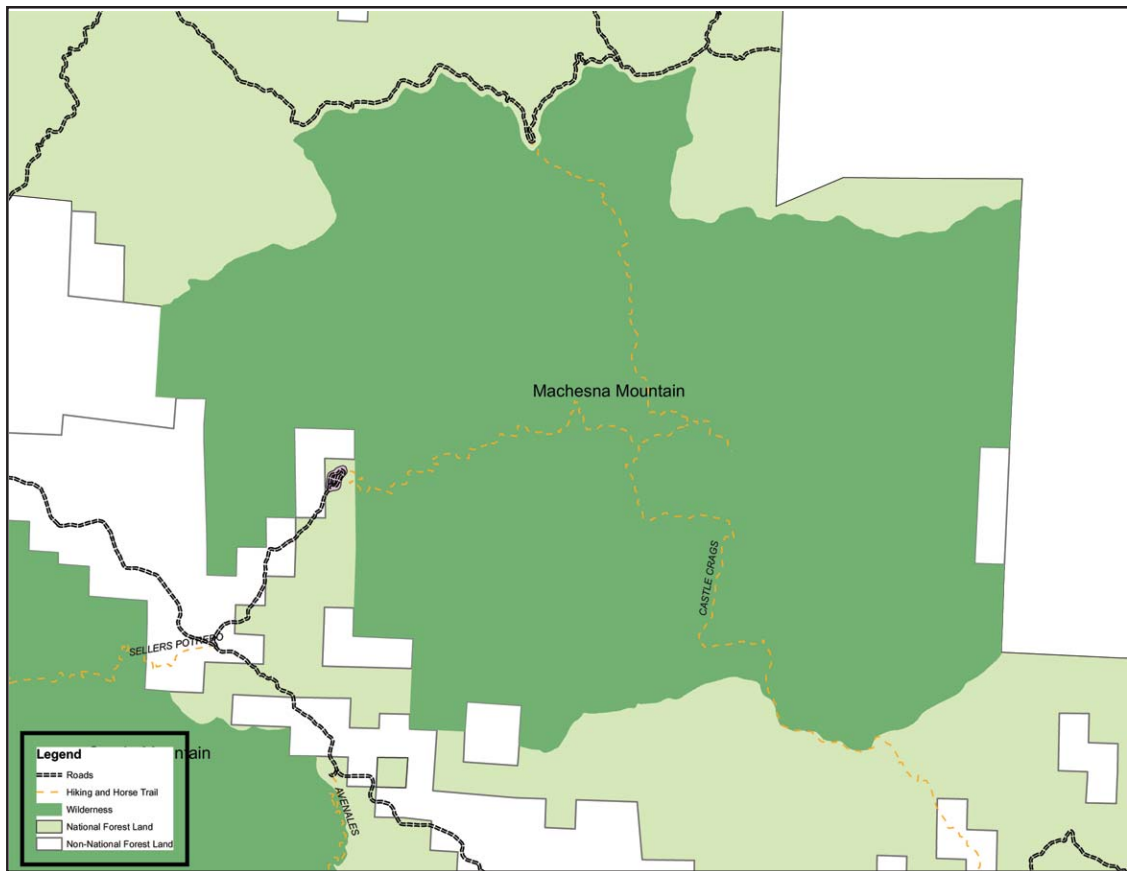


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Springs developed recreation site. Views of the surrounding La Panza mountains and Carrizo Plains are breathtaking.

**Machesna Mountain Trail (1601):** A 9 mile hike of moderate difficulty. The trail follows pine-covered ridgelines and the walk is pleasant though challenging. Memorable views include the Temblor Mountain Range, Carrizo Plains Ecological Preserve, Bear Trap Canyon, and Castle Crags.

### Trail Access

**American Canyon Trail:** Access to this trail is limited to six weeks a year (normally August/September), during rifle deer season. The trail can be reached by taking Highway 58 to Pozo Road. Follow Pozo Road past Pozo, to Avenales Road. Turn right, and travel 7 miles to the sign for American Canyon Campground. Turn left, the campground is 1.2 miles beyond this point. The Wilderness trailhead is located at the upper end of the campground.

**Machesna Mountain Trail:** Continue past Pozo Summit and Queen Bee campground to find the Chester Springs entrance. The trailhead is 1.5 miles up this four-wheel drive route.

### Hunting And Fishing

You may hunt and fish in the wilderness under State Fish and Game regulations.

### Further Information

Machesna Mountain Wilderness information may be obtained at the USDA Forest Service, Santa Lucia District Office, 1616 Carlotti Drive, Santa Maria CA 93454. (805) 925-9538.

### Any Questions We Can't Answer?

Here is a short list of references:

- \* Geology of San Luis Obispo County, by David Chipping.
- \* Guide to Western Wildlife, by Buddy Mays.
- \* Field Guide to Western Birds, by Roger Tory Peterson.
- \* The Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County, by Robert F. Hoover.
- \* San Luis Obispo County Pathways: A Guide to the Historical Highlights of San Luis Obispo County, by Loren Nicholson.
- \* San Luis Obispo County Trail Guide, by the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club.
- \* Soft Paths, by Bruce Hampton and David Cole.