

HIKE of the MONTH



Laguna-PCT Loop—*Moderate/Challenging* ■ ■

Recommended Level: Cadettes through adults

Date: April 1-30, 2021

Cost: Free (self-guided)

Please note that this is a self-guided, family hike (not a troop event.) Please wear masks on the trail if you encounter other people, and follow proper COVID-19 protocols.

Length: 10 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

Elevation Gain/Loss: 1453'

Driving directions: Interstate 8 east to Sunrise Highway. Drive north, through the Mount Laguna Village, to mile marker 25.3

Parking: Mile 25.2 on Sunrise Highway. Parking is a dirt lot on the east side of the highway.

Adventure Parking Pass: required

Bring: [10 +2 Essentials](#)

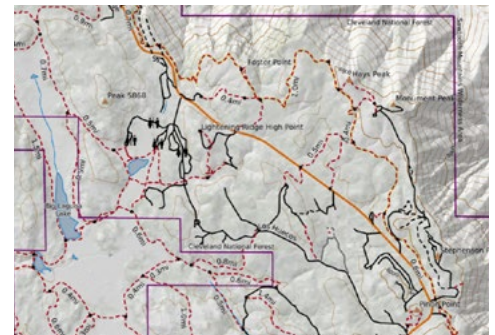
Maps:

Advanced: Print your own orientation/size/scale:

<https://caltopo.com/m/RS6A>. At the top of the page, click on "Print", then "Print to a PDF". You might want to print this large map in 2 halves to maximize your view on each section, and adjust to 1:24,000 scale.

Easy: print one PDF map: <https://caltopo.com/p/3U5J>

See specifics on reverse



General Route:

This view-filled loop incorporates 4 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) with the Big Laguna Trail. Enjoy great vistas over Anza Borrego desert—and on a clear day you can see north all the way to San Jacinto and San Geronio. Once you leave the PCT, cross Sunrise Highway and head south, you'll enjoy expansive views of Big Laguna Meadow and the Big Laguna Lake.

HIKING LEVELS

■ Easy (all levels of hikers) ■ Moderate (intermediate) ■ Strenuous (experienced only)

Specifics: Turn by turn

- From the parking lot: head east a 1/2 mile on the connector trail to the PCT. Head north, passing a short detour trail along the way to Foster Point at (2.5 miles).
- At 4.5 miles, leave the PCT and turn left to reach the busy Penny Pines trailhead. Cross Sunrise Highway (carefully!) and pick up the Noble Canyon Trail heading due west.
- After .1 mile, turn left onto the Big Laguna Trail. Head south, and stay on the Big Laguna Trail, passing a junction to an alternate Noble Canyon route.
- At mile 5.7, pass a junction on your right that leads toward the west side of the big meadow and the Sunset Trail. Continue south along the east side of the meadow.
- At mile 6.5, pass a junction to the left that heads over to Little Laguna Lake. Continue straight south along Laguna Meadow,
- At mile 7.3 you'll reach a big junction with trails that lead to the lake—a worthwhile stop to look at all the birds that hang out there.
- To continue, head east (left) to remain on the Big Laguna Trail, with the ridge on your left and a finger of meadow on your right. 2 parallel trails lead to the same place, the more wooded trail on the left provides wonderful shade and no bikes. Regardless of which path you choose, go .2 mile and at the cattle gate turn east (right) across the meadow, following a wire fence to another junction. Stay the course, heading east to curve into the shady forest again for another .6 miles.
- At about mile 8.3 you reach the next junction—Big Laguna Trail (heading east) and the flat meadow trail, heading south—go left (east) for a short .1 miles.
- Turn left again to remain on the Big Laguna Trail. This last push to your car will take you uphill for .8 miles, where it connects with an old fire road.
- Continue east along the dirt fire road, and at mile 9.6 you'll see a trail on the left that heads back to your car. Turn left on this trail, and drop .4 miles to Sunrise Highway and your car parked across the street.

Key Risks:

- Possibly weather (heat/cold/wind)
- Mountain bikes, specifically on the Laguna side of Sunrise Highway
- Rattlesnakes, mountain lions

Be safe! Have fun! Share your pictures!

- Send us a picture: [GSSD Backpacking](#)
- Post a picture on the [GSSD Trail Buddies Facebook Page](#) (completion of Wilderness Hiking is a requirement to join this private group. We encourage you to join GSSD Trail Buddies to stay connected to the GSSD hiking and backpacking program, and learn about upcoming hikes, classes, and trips.)

