



2023 Interagency Wilderness Ranger Academy

San Bernardino National Forest

Where to Go, What to Bring, and What to Expect

Base Camp Location

Heart Bar Search and Rescue Facility: Wilderness Ranger Academy will have its base camp at the Heart Bar Search and Rescue Facility, located just off Highway 38 at **46422 Heart Bar Park Rd.** (See Figure 1, below). There will be a gate across the road but it will be “dummy” locked. Please ensure the gate is closed behind you.

From Big Bear Lake drive southwest on Highway 38 (toward Redlands) for about 22 miles (approximately 35 minutes). Turn left at Heart Bar Park Rd (look for a small sign for the Heart Bar Search and Rescue Facility) and follow directional signs to Wilderness Ranger Academy (WRA).

From Redlands drive northeast on Highway 38 toward Mill Creek Ranger Station. From the Ranger Station continue another 23.4 miles on Hwy 38 to Heart Bar Park Rd (look for a small sign for the Heart Bar Search and Rescue Facility) and follow directional signs to Wilderness Ranger Academy (WRA).

Wilderness Academy Locations

Greyback Amphitheatre: On the morning of Tuesday, June 6th, Academy will be held at Greyback Amphitheatre approximately 4 miles west of the Heart Bar Base Camp off of Highway 38 (See Figure 1), adjacent to the beautiful San Gorgonio Wilderness. This is an outdoor venue so be sure to dress for the weather and bring sun protection. **Parking is limited so we encourage you to carpool.**

Heart Bar Search and Rescue Facility: Wednesday, June 7th – Friday June 9th all sessions will convene in either classrooms or outdoor areas at Heart Bar. The Pack Stock courses will be held at the Heart Bar Corrals. You will be notified of specific locations at base camp check-in.



Interagency Wilderness Ranger Academy Locations
San Bernardino National Forest



Figure 1

Academy Registration

Registration will be available at the Heart Bar Search and Rescue Facility on Monday, June 5th from 1:00-6:00 pm. This location is in close proximity to the San Gorgonio Wilderness and hiking opportunities. **If you will not arrive before 6:00 pm there will also be an opportunity to check-in on Tuesday morning from 7:30 – 8:00 am at Greyback Amphitheatre.**

Camping

Camping will be in a dispersed area at the Heart Bar Search and Rescue Facility (6,880 feet foot elevation). **Come prepared for car camping** at a site that has drinking water and port-a-potties. The nearest coin-operated showers are available at San Gorgonio Campground (a 10-minute drive). No hook-ups or dump stations are available for RVs at Heart Bar. We suggest bringing camp chairs, folding camp tables, tarps for stormy



weather, and food for all meals. Bear activity is high in the area, so all food and toiletries must be stored appropriately (in bear-proof containers or inside buildings or vehicles). Expect to share your campsite with others and bring earplugs if you are a light sleeper to avoid being disturbed by noise from the highway or nearby campers. Carpooling is encouraged. A Rideshare form will be shared by email to facilitate coordinating carpooling options between participants. Please be respectful of fellow campers and follow **quiet hours between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am.**

Cell phone reception for both AT&T and Verizon is intermittent in camp and at course locations.

Meals

Meals are the responsibility of attendees and we recommend bringing food for the week with you. There are no cooking facilities available. Morning Coffee will be provided Tuesday-Friday. Be sure to join your fellow Rangers for a Thursday evening optional spaghetti dinner hosted by the San Geronio Wilderness Association! Vegetarian and meat options will be available.

Food Storage

Black bears and small critters live and wander in these areas. Food lockers are not provided at the campsite. Be diligent about storing all of your food, coolers, garbage, and other scented items in bear-proof containers, inside buildings, or in vehicles.

Campfires

A group campfire area will be established at the edge of the landing zone. Use only dead and downed wood or purchase locally available firewood. Never leave the fire unattended. Individual fires are not permitted due to fire danger in the area.

Site Hazards

Please review your Unit's Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) for the following: hazard trees, black bears, insect stings, and bites. Mosquitos and yellow jackets are possible. A copy of the JHA's for these hazards will be available at the registration tent.

Pets

We recommend leaving your pets at home. If you must bring your dog, please ensure it is on a leash at all times. **WARNING:** There is rat poison around this facility; so keep a close watch on your dog.

Trash Removal

There will be dumpsters available at the site.



Weather

Weather can be variable in the region this time of year. It can range from sunny, warm in the mid 80's, to cold, rain, or even snow. Heart Bar is located at 6,880 feet in elevation. Come prepared for possible cold nights below freezing! Suggested clothing and gear range from warm, waterproof clothing and footwear if the week is forecast to be cold; to sunhats, sunscreen, and lightweight summer clothing for a warmer forecast. Be sure to check the forecast before you travel!

Alternate Lodging

Several alternative campgrounds are available in the area.
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/sbnf/recreation/camping-cabins/?recid=26225&actid=29>

Numerous hotels exist in Big Bear or Redlands (30 or 45-minute drive, respectively).

Nearby Amenities

Big Bear (a 30-minute drive from Heart Bar) offers restaurants, shops, attractions, fuel stations, public services, a hospital, and medical clinics. There is also a Big Five sporting goods store where you can pick up forgotten supplies.



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Skills Course Descriptions

During the registration process you had an opportunity to identify your prioritized ranking for skills courses: Leave No Trace Trainer; Crosscut Saw Certification; Crosscut Saw Train the Trainer; Wilderness First Aid; Working Safely with Pack Stock; Introduction to Basic Horsemanship and Pack Stock Safety; Backcountry Navigation (Map, Compass & GPS); Trail Assessment and Maintenance; and Campsite Monitoring/Restoration. You can find the specific course you have been assigned on posted on the registration website: [California Ranger Academy](https://california.rangeracademy.org) | [Society for Wilderness Stewardship \(wildernessstewardship.org\)](https://wildernessstewardship.org).

SKILLS COURSES (Wednesday, June 7 – Friday, June 9)

Leave No Trace Trainer (2 days)

The Trainer Course is a vital component of the nationwide LNT program. It is a shortened version of the Master Educator course, in which participants receive introductory training in LNT skills and ethics in a condensed two-day format. The 16-hour course will be in a setting where the skills can be observed and practiced.

The LNT curriculum focuses on techniques for learning and teaching minimum-impact outdoor ethics.

The course is focused on the 7 principles of LNT:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces
- Dispose of waste properly
- Leave what you find
- Minimize campfire impacts
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other visitors

Each participant will be assigned to teach their peers at least one of the seven principles.

Crosscut Saw Certification (2-day class for A-level recertifications and new certifications / 1-day class for B-level re-certifications)

The crosscut saw training and certification course is primarily geared toward providing new sawyers with bucking certification at the A or B level. Please come prepared for two full field days and arrange to have adequate tools, including saws, axes, wedges, and all other necessary gear. You must also provide your own Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This includes a hard hat, work gloves, eye



protection, long sleeve shirt, long pants, and boots. Please ensure that all enrollees from your unit have enough tools to split into fully equipped groups of 2 or 3.

Accommodation of experienced sawyers hoping to upgrade to C certification will be dependent on the need and available trainers. These sawyers would be expected to be involved in demonstrating skills to other participants and should plan to arrive with the appropriate gear and tools needed for leading a small logout crew.

NOTE: Current First Aid/CPR certification is not required to participate in crosscut training, but any crosscut certification achieved at the Ranger Academy (or anywhere else) is not valid without current First Aid/CPR certification. Anyone expecting to instruct crosscut or upgrade their certification from a B to a C at the academy must have current First Aid/CPR certification.

Crosscut Saw Train the Trainer *(1 day)*

This course will introduce experienced sawyers who are interested in serving as part of the crosscut saw instructor cadre to the newly released Forest Service saw training curriculum and modules, “Developing Thinking Sawyers.” This “Train the Trainer” session will help you, as an instructor, to provide consistent messaging. The course was designed to be delivered in a way that provides for the most efficient transfer of knowledge from instructors to students.

NOTE: Those participating in this course will also be assigned to the 2 day crosscut saw certification session.

Wilderness First Aid *(2 days)*

This 18-hour class includes the complete Wilderness First Aid curriculum covering patient assessment, traumatic injury, and environmental illness/injury. The class will include several field scenarios, so be prepared to work outside on both days.

Working Safely with Pack Stock *(1 day)*

This course will be an introduction to working safely around pack and saddle animals and will cover equine behavior, and the differences between horses and mules. Students will learn how to safely approach, lead, and tie up animals. The class will include discussions about how stock can be used in wilderness and considerations when working with volunteers who have their own stock.

Participants will learn about equipment used for packing and be introduced to building a load for a pack animal. You will learn how to tie a box hitch and will be given time to practice with several different types of objects and tools. Class will conclude with a discussion on how to prepare gear, tools, and supplies to be packed in as well as a discussion about camping with stock.



Introduction to Basic Horsemanship and Pack Stock Safety *(2 days)*

The focus of this class will be to learn how to safely work around riding and pack animals. Basic stock handling and packing techniques will be demonstrated and there will be plenty of hands-on practice working with the animals, leading, tying, brushing, saddling, and riding animals, as well as building loads, and tying hitches. Students will have time to practice with both pack barrels and live pack animals.

Topics to be covered in this class will include:

- Staying safe while working with riding animals
- Basic Riding Skills
- Introduction to pack stock
- selection of gear and equipment
- Building pack loads
- Tying the box hitch
- How to safely pack trail tools

Backcountry Navigation (Map, Compass & GPS) *(1 day)*

This course will offer an exploration into backcountry navigation. Rangers will gain experience using maps, compasses, and various forms of GPS-enabled devices. Data collection tools and methods will also be explored. Please bring your compass, smartphone, tablet, or GPS device, if you have one.

This course will not require overnight backpacking. It will include one day trip with participants returning to base camp at the end of the day. The Backcountry Navigation course will be a long day so please be prepared with lunch and have plenty of water.

Course Objectives

Rangers will:

- Read a topo map
- Understand how to read and use a compass
- Find their pace
- Take a field bearing
- Navigate using a field bearing
- Orient maps
- Take a map bearing
- Use declination and convert from map and field bearings or from field to map bearings
- Understand different mapping grids
- Choose an ideal route of travel to reach a destination
- Understand GPS abilities
- Use GPS, maps, and compasses together to ensure navigation redundancy
- Explore GPS-enabled data collection methods



Trail Assessment and Maintenance *(2 days)*

The goal of this workshop is to build knowledge in trail assessment and maintenance solutions. Presenters will cover techniques used in a variety of terrain and sensitive areas. We will discuss Best Management Practices for trail maintenance, teach participants how to read the landscape, and break down the assessment process to identify root causes of trail failures. Instructors will discuss site-specific applications of Best Management Practices including how and where design standards may be pushed to achieve desired trail experiences.

The objective of this workshop is to identify and discuss key concepts for effective trail maintenance and encourage future learning in the following areas:

1. Contouring alignments
2. Trail Design and specifications
3. Drainage design and drainage frequency
4. Clinometer use
5. Maximum short-pitch grades
6. Soil, vegetation, and precipitation as design parameters
7. Restoring closed trails

The target audience is trail and land managers, trail partner groups, and trail volunteers who have minimal experience to extensive experience.

Attendees should bring sturdy shoes with ankle protection, long sleeve shirts, pants, gloves, eye protection, and a hard hat. Tools will be provided.

Campsite Monitoring and Restoration *(1 day)*

This one-day course will focus on a combination of data collection and restoration techniques for campsites in wilderness. Campsite data collection methods and examples will be covered as they pertain to Wilderness Stewardship Performance (WSP) and assisting in making management decisions. Techniques for recording data starting with paper forms and apps such as Survey 123, Collector, and Field Maps will be explained. Data organization and analysis using ARC GIS Online will assist participants in bringing the process together. We will then go into the field to get hands-on experience in campsite inventory data collection.

We will discuss campsite restoration techniques including how to break up and disperse fire rings, and iceberg rocks into inappropriate tent pads, and naturalize sites. A basic overview of grip hoist safety, equipment, and demonstrations of setting up different systems will give participants a solid base on the use of this tool. Participants must provide their own personal protective equipment including hardhat, work gloves, eye protection, long sleeve shirt, long pants, and boots.

Field Trip – San Geronio Wilderness *(1 day)*

This is an opportunity to get out into the wilderness with colleagues from throughout the region! Explore a new wilderness area and have lively discussions about local management challenges such as post fire recovery and visitor use management.