Island in the Sky:
The rocks and soil are different on Bald Mountain than the surrounding area. Ages ago, intense heat and pressure hardened mud, sea shells and sand on the bottom of a vast ocean, forming layers of dark slate, white dolomite and sandstone.

Now, 200 million years later, erosion and uplifts have left only a few of these metasedimentary formations. The soil made from these ancient rocks is richer in minerals and holds water more efficiently than the surrounding granitic soils. This results in the diverse and abundant plant life found on Bald Mountain.

Lookout Tower:
In 1951, the Sequoia National Forest took advantage of this "island in the sky" for use as a fire lookout point. Bald Mountain Lookout scans over 1,000 square miles with a view of the Dome Land, Golden Trout and South Sierra Wildernesses, as well as Olancha Peak and Mt. Whitney, and the headwaters of the Kern Wild and Scenic River. Elevation is 9,430 feet. The present tower, built in 1955, was packed-in in pieces by mule train from what was then the end of the road at Kennedy Meadows. The Lookout became accessible in 1967.

Thank you for your help in making forest visits enjoyable and safe! Plan ahead by obtaining a National Forest map at one of the following offices:

Kern River Ranger District
11380 Kernville Rd.
Kernville, CA 93238
760-376-3781

Forest Supervisor’s Office
1839 S. Newcomb Street
Porterville, CA 93257
559-784-1500

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