

**Kentucky Camp**  
Soak in the stunning scenery below Mount Wrightson, adventure on the Arizona Trail, and even spend the night at this historic mining camp in the foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains.

**Know before you go**

- SEASONS:** Year-round. Be aware of extreme heat, venomous wildlife, and monsoon storms during the summer.
- CAMPING:** Dispersed camping is available outside of the historic district boundary.
- CABIN RENTAL:** Rent the restored, three-room adobe cabin. Advanced reservations required at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).
- PARKING:** Parking area is 3/8 mile from Kentucky Camp. Call (520) 281-2296 if you need vehicular access due to disability.

- AMENITIES:** Picnic tables, propane grill, vault toilets, and stall for solar showers. Please carry trash out with you.
- WATER:** Drinking water is available from four hose bibs on site. Cabin is equipped with an outdoor sink.
- PETS:** Pets are permitted on leash. Please pick up pet waste.
- ROAD SAFETY:** Heavy OHV use on Forest Service roads outside of Kentucky Camp. All drivers and vehicles must be licensed and remain on designated motor vehicle routes.

**Attractions**



**KENTUCKY CAMP HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Step back in time to days when a mining engineer, backed by a California businessman, designed an elaborate system to use hydraulic mining here to reach deeper deposits of gold after the

placer gold was gone. Check out exhibits in the restored headquarters building, relax on the sprawling porch, and rent the historic cabin to extend your stay and marvel at the star-filled night sky. Find cabin amenities and make reservations at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). The headquarters building is also available to reserve for events.



**THE ARIZONA TRAIL**

The 16.9-mile Santa Rita Mountains segment (Passage 5) of the 800-mile Arizona National Scenic Trail passes through Kentucky Camp. Beyond the historic district, the trail winds through grassy hills studded with oak, juniper, agave, and other unique plant life. Mining

relics and some interpretive signs line the trail south of Kentucky Camp. White-tailed deer, javelina, black bear, mountain lions, and many species of migratory and resident birds frequent this area. Visit [www.aztrail.org](http://www.aztrail.org) for up-to-date route status and information.

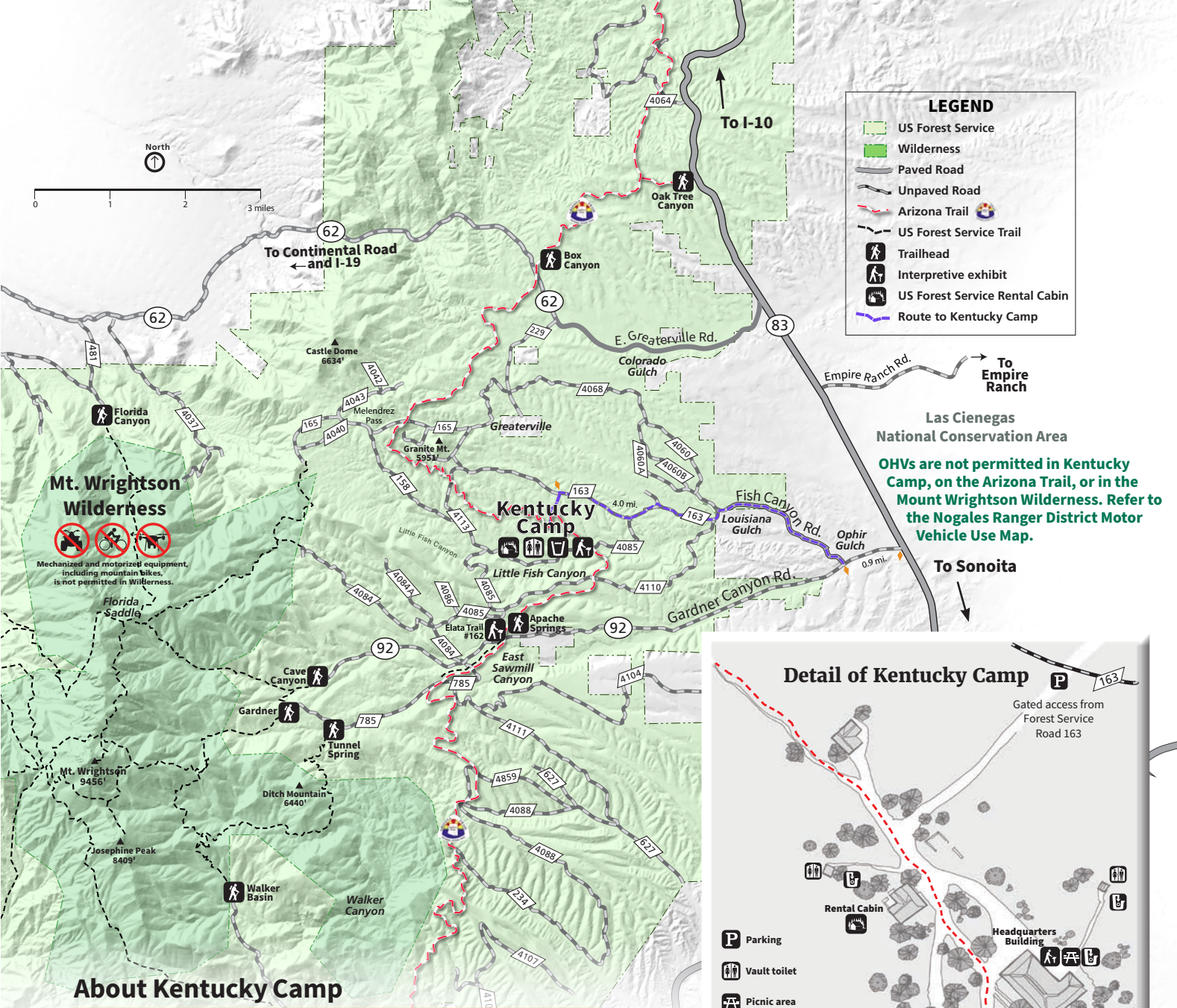
**Multiuse Routes**

**H - Hike B - Bike E - Equestrian OHV - Off-highway vehicle**  
Share the trail. Communicate and be courteous with other users.

<b>Arizona Trail</b> Passage 5 (H, B, E)	This rolling section of the Arizona Trail stretches 16.9 miles between the Gardner and Oak Tree Canyon Trailheads. The trail reaches Kentucky Camp approximately 4 miles north of Gardner Canyon. <b>Distance:</b> Any <b>Difficulty:</b> Moderate <b>Use:</b> Light
<b>Fish Canyon Road</b> <b>FS 163</b> (H, B, E, OHV)	This dirt road leads to Kentucky Camp and provides access to a network of two-track trails open to motorized vehicles. Primitive campsites available along road. <b>Distance:</b> 5.7 miles (one way) <b>Difficulty:</b> Moderate <b>Use:</b> Heavy
<b>Gardner Canyon Road</b> <b>FR 92</b> (H, B, E, OHV)	This dirt road leads to a parking area for the Arizona Trail, many primitive campsites, and the Cave Canyon and Gardner Canyon Trailheads. High-clearance required to reach trailheads. <b>Distance:</b> 8.7 miles (one way) <b>Difficulty:</b> Moderate <b>Use:</b> Heavy

**EMERGENCY OR FIRE: DIAL 911**

**NOGALES RANGER STATION: (520) 281-2296**



## About Kentucky Camp

The Santa Rita Mountains, known as *Ce:wi Duag* or “Long Mountain” to the Tohono O’odham, have been inhabited by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial. Many tribes have connections to this land today and continue traditions here, including gathering native plants and holding ceremonies, though the landscape has changed.

The prospect of gold drew miners from near and far in the late 1800s, sprouting boomtowns on the eastern slopes of the Santa Ritas. Early miners hauled water to the dry, sandy washes to separate placer gold from gravel using pans, sluices, and rockers. Though most of the placer gold was gone by the mid-1880s, the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company formed in 1902 with plans to use hydraulic mining to blast hillsides with high-pressure water to release more gold from deeper sediments. They built infrastructure, some of which is still visible today, to transport water from the mountain more than eight miles to Boston Gulch. The buildings at Kentucky Camp, constructed of adobe in 1903, served as headquarters for the company for a short time before it folded. The property was then used as a cattle ranch into the 1960s. The Forest Service acquired the site in 1989, and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

This site is managed in partnership with Friends of Kentucky Camp.

Map updated June 2026



## Preserving This Place

By the 1990s, these buildings were significantly deteriorated. Walls and roofs were collapsed. However, adobe restoration experts and the Friends of Kentucky Camp worked with the Forest Service to stabilize, preserve, and restore what was left. Due to their ongoing efforts, and lots of volunteer help, this treasure trove of area history and century-old adobe structures survives to tell the story of this special place.

Friends of Kentucky Camp hosts volunteer work days. If you like to get your hands dirty, learn about the art of adobe, and help preserve history, find them on Facebook, or visit their website to find out about upcoming events.

[www.kentuckycamp.org](http://www.kentuckycamp.org)

Produced by the Public Lands Interpretive Association [www.publiclands.org](http://www.publiclands.org)