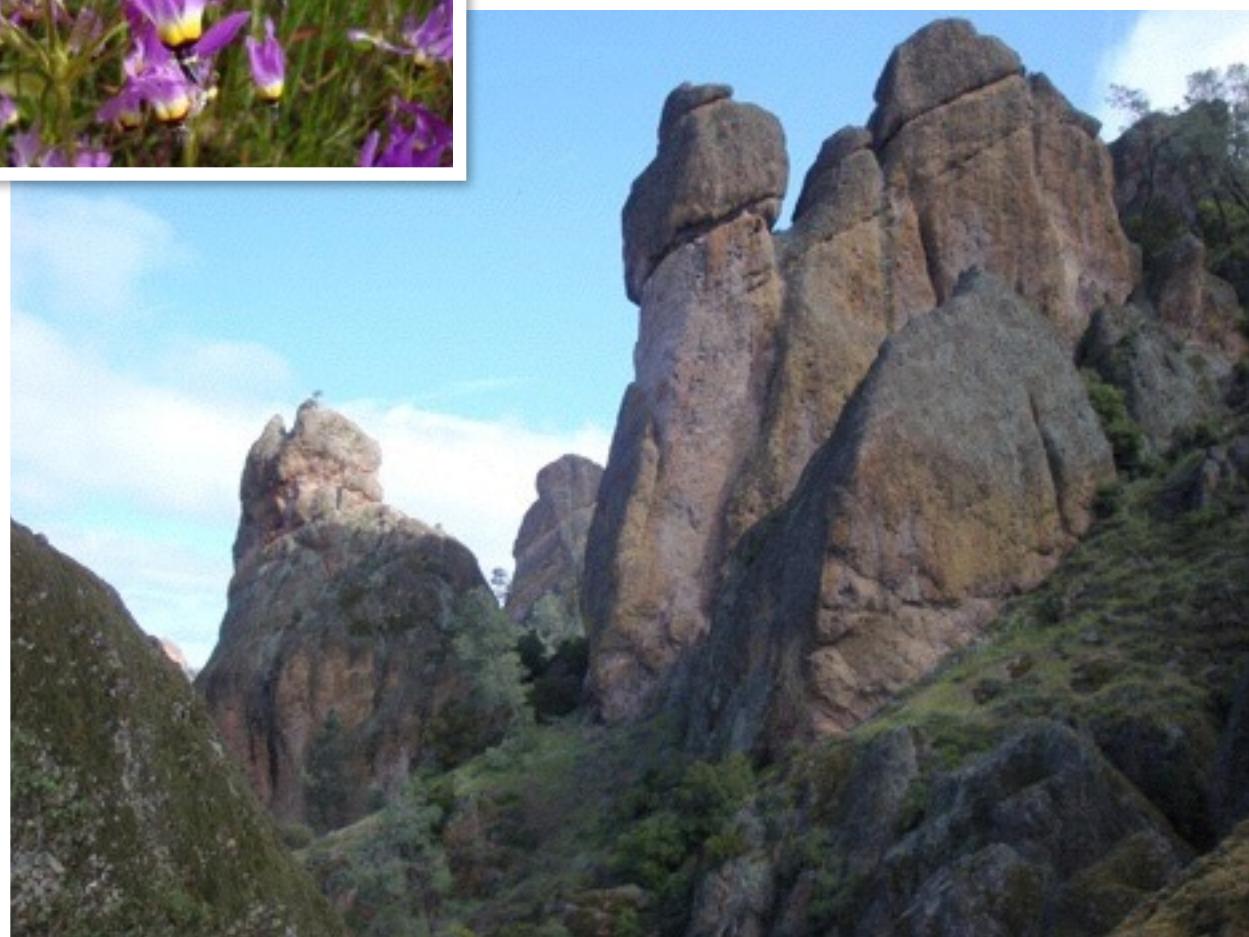




West Pinnacles

National Monument PARK !



10 AM Saturday 16 April 2016

Leaders: Leona and Bruce Baumgart

RSVP: by email bgbbaumgart@mac.com or text message 408.799.8998.

Bring: Trail snacks, water, sun protection and a flashlight for the cave.

Directions to Trailhead: Drive south on US-101 to exit #302 in Soledad. Follow the CA-146 signs (a couple of turns) to get through town. The total distance from Los Gatos to the West Pinnacle parking lot is exactly 100 miles. Driving time is under 2 hours. The hike starts at the West Chaparral Trailhead Parking Lot.

Saturday 4/16 is a Special National Parks for FREE Entrance day!

~~Bring your Senior National Park pass, otherwise the parking fee is \$15 per car.~~

All are welcome !

Trail Description:

Pinnacles West in April includes wildflowers, condors, dark caves, stair climbing and a CCC built tunnel.

Study the hike map which is colored #1 Green: for the Juniper Canyon Trail ascending into the High Pinnacles. Then #2 Pink: turn right for climbing rocks and stairs on the High Peaks Trail. Or turn left and take short cut #3 Orange: for the Tunnel Trail which is an easier ascent to the High Peaks Trail. Then continue #3 Orange on the Old Pinnacles Trail to #4 Blue: Balcony Trail for a total hike of 8 miles, with elevation gain of 1500 feet, taking under 5 hours.

The full hike (which we did five years ago in 2011) is likely too hard for most of us senior citizens. So I am likely to do only #1, #2 and #4 being very slow and careful going up the narrow rocky steps. There were numerous Condors flying in the thermals last week when I previewed this hike.

If I get to the upper end of Tunnel Trail around noon, I may feel strong enough to do the full hike. Otherwise I intend to go back down Tunnel to Juniper Canyon. Take a 20 minute rest at the parking lot. Then do the Balcony Caves out and back, which is level and about two miles in say 90 minutes (allowing a little extra time for slow cave travel). The total shorter hike is under 4 hours for 6 miles and 1300 feet.

Balconies Cave is open this year. The trail through the cave is safe and fairly easy, but you may get wet feet. You **MUST** have a flashlight, its **VERY** dark. Bruce will bring extra flashlights.

After the hike: drive 13 miles (in 30 minutes) back to Soledad for a late lunch at a Mexican seafood restaurant which is in a small shop in a mall near US-101 exit #302. The restaurant is open all day so arriving around 3pm or 4pm is OK. All the usual menu items are available in addition to seafood.

Carpool: Meet and Greet 7:45 am from Los Gatos. Exactly 100 miles to the trailhead. Eighty Seven, 87 miles to Soledad exit #302 then 13 miles going east on CA-146 (number of turns in town: look for the signs). Note: park entrance and small visitors center are 2 miles before the Chaparral Trailhead Parking Lot.