

Hiking Permits: Idyllwild and San Jacinto Area

In October of 2025 the USFS unveiled an online system for obtaining trail permits for hikes on the popular trails around Idyllwild. In the past, the process required a Hike Leader to drop by the USFS office in Idyllwild, fill out a two part form, slip a copy of the permit into the appropriate box and carry the other part of the form on the trail.

The new system obviates the trip to the USFS office and can be completed online with the permit delivered to you in email (see exception below). If you need a permit for a hike on any of the trails listed below, go to <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=5zZb7e4BvE6GfuA8-g1GI0VKwVUBdqRHmqqVHaSh3LNUODFES0o1UIhQQzVSNDY1SUg1R1RZUIE0Uy4u>, complete and submit the form and almost immediately you will receive an email containing your permit. You can then forward a copy of the permit to the hikers who will join you on the hike so that everyone has a copy of the permit. The USFS recommends that every hiker in a group carries a copy of the permit. The easiest way to accomplish this is to provide everyone in the group with either the email permit or a digital photo of a paper permit.

The trails that require a permit include:

- Devil's Slide
- Deer Springs
- South Ridge
- Marion Mountain
- Spitler Peak
- Seven Pines
- Fuller Ridge

Devil's Slide Exception-

Due to the extreme popularity of the Devil's Slide trail during the summer, the USFS has set a limit on the number of permits that will be issued for Saturdays and Sundays from May 23 (Memorial

Day weekend) to September 7 (Labor Day weekend). To obtain one of these permits you must use a different permit request than the online form described above. Download the PDF here: <https://www.fsva.org/s/WILDERNESS-VISITOR-PERMIT-APPLICATION-2022-pcef.pdf>. Fill out the form in the PDF and send it to the USFS office in Idyllwild. The USFS will issue 5 permits (up to 12 people per permit) in advance of the date requested, another 5 the day before the date requested and the rest (for a total of 30) on the day of the hike when the office opens at 08:00.

Given that we plan our hikes in advance, I encourage you to send in your permit requests as early as possible to improve the odds of getting one of these limited permits. To send the completed permit request to the USFS you can mail it (you know: paper, envelope, stamp) or scan the request to make a PDF and either fax it or email it (SM.FS.sanjacintoRD@usda.gov). You should do this at least 2 weeks before the date of the hike. The USFS will send your approved permit back to you in the mail and you need to carry it on trail.

Hiking from the Tram-

The trails adjacent to the tram building are within the San Jacinto State Park rather than the national forest. If you ride the tram to hike these trails you must pick up a permit as described here: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30372.

The State Park and the USFS honor each other's day use permits. This means that if you have a USFS permit to hike up Devil's Slide and your route takes you into the state park or wilderness areas, you do not need to obtain a separate permit for those areas. The reverse is true, i.e.- if you pick up a permit at the Long Valley Ranger Station, you can hike USFS trails without a permit from the USFS.