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Sequoia National Monument—Forest of 100 Giants

Kick off summer with a trip to Redwood Meadow campground, one of the most beautiful campsites in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Hike to a grove of giant sequoia and to fascinating Needles Fire Lookout perched atop an 8000-foot granite spire. Visit California Hot Springs and scenic Dome Rock. Optional activities include wading and fishing in nearby Peppermint Creek and mountain biking. Price includes all meals and activities.

About your leader(s):

Dave Wyman has conducted photography workshops and family camping trips since 1983. He founded the travel photography program and directed the wilderness outings program at the University of Southern California for 14 years. Wyman is the author and photographer of the guidebook, *Backroads of Northern California*.

Dates: Friday, July 4 to Sunday, July 6, 2008

Cost: Member \$110 per adult, \$70 per child under 16
Nonmember \$120 per adult, \$75 per child under 16

DAY 1

Drive up to the campground at your leisure. Trip leaders will arrive by early afternoon. Enjoy dinner, followed by a friendly campfire session, complete with marshmallows and hot chocolate.

DAY 2

After breakfast, make the five-minute drive to the trailhead leading to a beautiful grove of rarely visited giant sequoias. After lunch, visit a spectacular fire lookout, which has been constructed atop a massive granite spire, offering wonderful views of the Sierras in all directions. Or, the group may choose an easier walk around the campground or play and fish in the water at nearby Peppermint Creek. Dinner and campfire session, with hot chocolate and s'mores.

DAY 3

After breakfast, pack up camp and drive south, with a chance to stop first at Dome Rock, which is a hunk of rounded granite with a top the size of a few football fields and an impressive view of the Kern River Canyon. The group may also visit the Redwood Grove with its short Walk of One Hundred Giants. A final stop could be at California Hot Springs, an old resort in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Then it will be time to head for home.

Cost includes:

Trip leaders, two breakfasts (Saturday and Sunday), one lunch (Saturday), two dinners (Friday and Saturday), guided hikes, activities, and beautiful campground at Quaking Aspen Campground (voted one of the “Top 100 Campgrounds in the West” by *Sunset* magazine).

Cost does not include:

Cost does not include transportation.

Suggested Equipment List:

- Warm sleeping bags and foam pads—we are camping at approximately 7000 ft. (bring an extra blanket to spread over everyone if you don't have warm sleeping bags)
- Tent
- Clothes for both warm and cool temperatures (recommended: ski caps, warm sweater or jacket)
- Comfortable walking shoes (hiking boots or jogging/tennis shoes are fine)
- Rain gear—even a plastic garbage bag will work
- Sun block
- Water bottle for our hikes
- Folding chair (optional)

Note: Air mattresses without a foam pad, or extra blankets, etc. used as padding, will transmit ground temperatures.

Driving Directions: Take I-5 North through the San Fernando Valley, and continue to the Highway 99 junction. Take Hwy. 99 to Bakersfield. Take Hwy. 65 North to Porterville. Take 190 East to Quaking Aspen. Look for gas stations along this stretch. The last available, “reasonably” priced gas station is in the little community of Springville, about 15 miles east of Porterville.

Drive the final 25 miles, which twist up into the mountains. About 9 miles past the little community of Camp Nelson, watch on your right for the Quaking Aspen Campground. Drive downhill about 20 yards and turn left into the group site parking loop. (If you pull straight ahead, you will end up in the family camping sites.) Park in the loop; we are on the loop's far end in sites A and B.

Notes: This is old-fashioned camping. The campground has running water, picnic tables, and an amphitheater where the leader will put on a slide show. There are no showers at the campground, and restrooms are of the basic outhouse design (no flushing). The nearest phone is at the Ponderosa Lodge, about 1.5 miles past the campground; cell phones can sometimes pick up a signal from our campground.

Showers: We'll only have to go one full day without a shower, because we can visit the California Hot Springs on the way back home, which provides a great way

to end the trip. Bring \$6 per person for the showers. A pool and Jacuzzis are also on hand, and we can buy a hamburger or an ice cream cone to help us make the drive back down to Highway 99.

Alternate Route: This route reverses the way we will leave Quaking Aspen campground.

Take Highway 65, as above, towards Porterville. Continue on 65 for approximately 30 miles.

Turn right onto Avenue 56. Continue to California Hot Springs. Turn left at the T intersection about a mile past the Hot Springs.

Continue about 12 miles to the junction (with a stop sign) at the Great American Highway, on the left. Make the left and continue about 12 miles to Quaking Aspen campground, which will be on your left. You will pass the Ponderosa Lodge, on your right, at about mile 10.

The campground is not well marked, so watch carefully once you pass the Ponderosa Lodge. There is a Quaker Meadow, also beyond the Ponderosa Lodge—continue past this to the next campground, Quaking Aspen.

This route involves more navigation than coming up through Porterville, but it features less twists and turns.

To register, call 619.255.0203 or visit www.sdnhm.org.