

From: psychosp@ping.com
Subject: Freedom Ridge (Groom Lake) Picnic Jan. 21
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[Supplement to the Groom Lake Desert Rat.]

Everyone in the world is invited to...

THE SECOND ANNUAL COULD-BE-CLOSED-ANY-DAY-NOW FREEDOM RIDGE PICNIC.

Taking place SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 1995, starting at 11:00 am (or whenever you arrive).

Come, bring your lawn chairs, binoculars and picnic lunch. Watch the secret base just sit there. Freedom Ridge is a hill, still on public land, overlooking the "nonexistent" GROOM LAKE AIR BASE featured in recent national newscasts and the LARRY KING UFO SPECIAL. Although you can visit the Ridge at any time (until the land is closed), here is a chance to do it as a communal experience.

This event is not to be confused with the "Freedom Ridge End-of-the-World Party," which will be held only when we have a formal closing date. The Air Force is seeking legal control of this land to keep visitors off. Last year at this time, we gathered for our first "Could-Be-Closed-Any-Day-Now Freedom Ridge Picnic," expecting it to be our last chance to see the base. The land is still open, however, thanks to the many federal procedures the Air Force itself must follow to obtain it. At this event, we will relive old times and celebrate the wonders of bureaucracy.

DISCLAIMER

This is a loosely organized get-together of interested citizens. There is no schedule of events and people can do whatever they want as long as they obey the law. The organizers of this picnic accept no liability whatsoever for any loss or injury. You are responsible for your own safety and for understanding the rules and risks of the place you are visiting. Below we have tried our best to give you the information you'll need to enjoy this event safely.

GENERAL PLAN

We will meet at 11 am (Pacific Time) at the Freedom Ridge trailhead. (See directions below.) After a briefing, we will proceed to the top by foot or four wheel drive. Stragglers can hike up on their own on a well marked trail when they arrive. At the top, we'll sit around in our lawn chairs, roast wieners over the fire and debate the Meaning of Life.

UFOs and Secret Aircraft are not guaranteed and probably won't

appear.

LOCATION

Freedom Ridge is a hill on public land next to the border of the Nellis Air Force Range about 12 miles west of the Groom Lake air base. The base can be plainly seen in the distance, but you will need binoculars or a telescope for the best view.

The location is about 140 road miles north of Las Vegas. The nearest towns are Rachel and Alamo. The terrain is scrub desert at an elevation of 5000 feet. Due to the altitude, patchy snow cover is possible in January, with daytime highs in the 40s or 50s. Weather is usually good, but there is a chance that rain, snow or wind will mar the event. (It will proceed regardless.) Heavy winter clothing, including hat, gloves and thermal underwear should be brought in case they are needed.

The summit of Freedom Ridge can be reached by a moderately challenging 50-minute hike from a well-maintained dirt road. The trail is marked by yellow ribbons tied around Joshua trees. Any vehicle can easily make it to the trailhead. The summit can also be reached by a very rugged four wheel drive road taking a different route, which will also be marked.

HOW TO GET THERE

The Freedom Ridge trailhead is about 2-1/2 hours north of Las Vegas (or 2-1/2 hours east of Tonopah). From Las Vegas, go north on I-15 about 20 miles to US-93 at Exit 64. Go north on US-93 about 85 miles to SR-375. Take SR-375 (not SR-318) west 15 miles until you reach the big dirt road to Groom Lake at milepost 34.6. (It is marked by a stop sign and maybe also a "THIS WAY TO SECRET BASE" sign.) This is a good dirt road that any car can handle. Take the dirt road west 13.6 miles until you see our cars parked beside a "Keep Right" sign. **DO NOT DRIVE PAST THE WELL-MARKED MILITARY BORDER JUST BEYOND.** Try to park off the road or as far to the right as you can.

[For those who want to visit Freedom Ridge on another day, the parking location is beside a "Keep Right" sign about 0.1 mile before the border. Cross the road to find the yellow ribbons tied around Joshua trees, and follow them. Do not cross the border marked by orange posts or any new "Restricted Area" sign. To avoid wandering across the border, do not hike at night. Security guards will watch you but will avoid contact unless you cross the border. Report any incidents to the event coordinator below.]

The best place to shop for supplies is Las Vegas. (Try Sahara Ave. west of I-15.) Gas up there, too. There are no gas or groceries between Las Vegas and Alamo. Last gas before Freedom Ridge is at Ash Springs (or Rachel).

OPTIONS

People can feel free to come and go on any schedule they choose, and the event will disperse whenever people decide to leave. For those who cannot arrive by 11 am, our cars will be easy to find and the trail is clearly marked. Look for instructions posted on one of the cars.

This is intended as a day trip, since it is too cold for casual camping (low of 10-30 degrees F). Those who feel comfortable with "polar bear" camping can try spending the night. (We recommend using two or three sleeping bags inside each other, plus a ground cover.) Camping and campfires are allowed almost anywhere on the public land outside the military border, including Freedom Ridge. Motels are available in Rachel or Alamo (Rooms are limited so reservations are essential.), but you can just as easily return to Las Vegas.

RISKS

-- The greatest danger in this area is wandering across the well-guarded military border, which is immediately adjacent to Freedom Ridge and the hiking trail. The border is marked by orange posts every 50 yards and stainless steel balls on posts every quarter mile. There is no fence. Wherever a road crosses the border, it is marked by clear Restricted Area signs but no gate or guard house.

People who are caught on the other side of the border are immediately detained. A fine of \$600 is usual, and you will have to reappear in court if you want the fine reduced.

-- Gas is available at only a few widely separated locations: Las Vegas, Alamo, Ash Springs and Rachel. Be sure to approach the area with a full tank of gas. The Ash Springs gas station is open 24 hours. Rachel's is open only 7am-7pm.

-- Cars can easily get stuck in the sand or on rocks on unmaintained dirt roads. Stay on the maintained dirt road unless you have a four wheel drive.

-- The 50-minute, 1-mile hike can be moderately challenging, but shouldn't be much trouble for most people. The vertical distance traveled is only about 500 feet, but the altitude makes it more tiring than at sea level. People who are seriously out of shape should think twice about hiking.

-- When driving in this area, cattle in the road are a serious danger. Cattle are unfenced and wander freely across the highway. Drive slowly at night. If you hit a cow, you are required by law to report it to the Sheriff or rancher.

BRING

-- Binoculars or a telescope are important for viewing the base. There is no legal limit to size and magnification.

-- Wieners and buns will be provided for roasting over the fire, but you should bring your own drinks and a backup lunch in case the wieners run out. If you come at 11 am, there will be four wheel drives available to transport your lunch to the top; otherwise, you should be prepared to carry it yourself.

-- Bring folding lawn chairs if you have them.

SANITATION

"Powder room" opportunities will be limited. A primitive latrine will be erected at the summit of Freedom Ridge, but it won't be pretty. The gentlemen shouldn't have much difficulty finding discrete locations, but the ladies must plan ahead and take advantage of their opportunities. Away from the ridge, all of Nevada is at your disposal.

EXPECTATIONS

Some people may be disappointed by the view from Freedom Ridge. What you see in the distance appears to be an ordinary Air Force base--albeit a very large one--beside a dry lake bed. No flying saucers or underground cities are evident. On weekends, the base is usually very quiet, with little aircraft or vehicle traffic. The main satisfaction is derived from the fact that this base "isn't there" officially. The best viewing time is in the morning, when the sun is behind you.

SECURITY

The border area is actively patrolled by an anonymous force of security guards wearing camouflage fatigues and driving white Jeep Cherokees. These "Cammo Dudes" watch Freedom Ridge with high power binoculars and video cameras that are capable of reading car license plates from a mile away. These guards are under orders to avoid contact with visitors (unless you cross the border). If they feel you have violated a law on public land, they will call the Lincoln County Sheriff to investigate. In this open terrain, the Sheriff can be seen coming from miles away.

The radio frequencies for the Sheriff are 154.86 and 155.77 MHz. The radio frequencies for the security patrols are usually scrambled; they include 418.05, 408.4, 142.2, 170.5 and 138.3. Groom Lake aircraft frequencies are: 120.35, 127.65, 118.45 and 261.1.

Be aware that the security patrols may record your license plate numbers and run them for identification.

FREE-SPEECH PROTEST (OPTIONAL)

According to a 1948 federal law (18 USC 795), it is illegal to take or publish photographs of any military installation

designated by the President as requiring such protection--but since the base does not officially exist it is hard to say what should or should not be photographed. No one has ever been prosecuted for taking pictures of the base, but the 1948 law has been used by the local Sheriff's Dept. to confiscate film from visitors. Regardless of what the film contains, it "vanishes" into Air Force hands and is never returned.

To protest the arbitrary seizing of film from visitors and the withholding of it without due process, we will be conducting a "Freedom Ridge Camera and Video Show" to coincide with the picnic. Participants are invited to bring cameras and display them proudly on the ridge. The "cameras" do not have to be functional or real, and to avoid the charge of inciting a federal crime, we cannot recommend that you bring film or video tape.

Your "camera" should be displayed only in the company of the group, since our strength lies in numbers. If, by chance, you are stopped by the Sheriff and are asked any question about photography, you should politely decline to provide any information and should not turn over any of your property without a warrant. You also should not reveal to your fellow visitors whether or not you have film in your camera, since there could be spies among us. (They're invited, too!)

This is the second such "Freedom Ridge Camera and Video Show." For the first, last August, the authorities kept their distance (except for a pleasant BLM ranger in a Smoky Bear hat), and there was no confrontation. This time, we'll have to try harder.

COURTESIES

- Stay away from the rancher's compound. -- Do not litter.
- Do not bring drugs or any other illegal substances. -- Firearms are discouraged.
- Obey the speed limit and other commonsense laws, especially within Lincoln County.
- Respect the land.
- Do not steal the Restricted Area signs. -- Do not taunt or moon the Cammo Dudes.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you plan to spend a night in Las Vegas en route, be aware that rooms in the city itself can be expensive and hard to find on weekends. We recommend staying outside the city in one of the big casino hotels at Stateline or Jean. Try Prima Donna (Exit 1 on I-15) at 800-367-7383 or Nevada Landing (Exit 12 on I-15) at 800-628-6682. Both are about \$32 on Friday & Saturday nights and \$18 on other nights.

Locally, the Little A-Le-Inn in Rachel has a limited number of rooms. Call 702-729-2515. In Alamo, the Meadow Lane Motel and Alamo Motel can both be reached at 702-725-3371. Rates here are

\$25-\$35.

VIEWER'S GUIDE

Detailed information on the area can be found in the "Area 51 Viewer's Guide." This 110-page visitor's guide includes maps, milepost logs, reference list, equipment advice and other information useful to travelers and researchers. It is available for \$15 plus \$3.50 priority mail postage from: Area 51 Research Center, HCR Box 38, Rachel, NV 89001. If time is short, it can also be ordered by telephone from the Event Coordinator.

FINAL

If this document doesn't answer your questions, feel free to email psychospy@aol.com or contact the Event Coordinator, Glenn Campbell, at 702-729-2648. (Only collect calls can be returned.)

Feel free to copy this document and post it or send it to whomever you wish.

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