

Rio Laja Trail- Section 7: *La Petaca Bridge Trail*

Description:

The right bank of the river has the preferred trail, as the left side travels up and down through carrizo fields. This trail has many interesting features and is shaded by many large trees. This section of the trail is 2.43 miles/ 3.9 km long and ends at the Puente Las Tumbas pueblito.

Access to trailhead parking:

Once past “Bachoco” entrance, cross under pedestrian bridge and look for arched entryway structure. Turn left just past La Hacienda Petaca (arched entryway structure). Turns into cobblestone road, with white fence and agricultural fields on left side. There will be a split in the road- take cobblestone road on the left. The road bends to the left at 1.12 miles/ 1.8 km, then becomes a dirt road. At 1.62 miles/ 2.6 km from Highway 51, find trailhead parking on this side of river wherever available or, during low water, cross the river to better parking on the left bank of the river.

Waypoint 1: Trailhead parking, mile 0.0/ km 0.0. GPS coordinate: 21.044, -100.813. At trailhead is a green metal walking bridge, crossing river. Begin on right bank of river (crossing bridge if necessary), taking a left turn to the north directly off of bridge (would be a direct right hand turn in front of bridge from parking on the HWY 51 side of the road). The trail begins with a dense carrizo stand on left, bordering an agricultural field on the right. Trail becomes an established footpath above riverbed.

Waypoint 2: Two large, white-barked trees on either side of the river at .35 miles/ .56 km. Observe greenhouse on the right. Cross the cobblestone road leading to the river.



Waypoint 3: Cobblestone bridge crossing the river, mile .6/ .97 km. Remain to left of agricultural field, until a wooden footbridge becomes visible ahead. Trail merges onto dirt road before reaching the bridge. The dirt road will recede, bordering private property on the right.

Trailhead parking on opposite bank



La Petaca Bridge

Waypoint 4: La Petaca Bridge, mile .95/ 1.53 km. Trail continues under the bridge, crossing dirt road, along agricultural fields to the right. Observe mesquite trees on the right. A dirt road enters the trail from the right. Path merges onto road and soon meets the cobblestone road (used to reach trailhead). Trail continues to left, along border of agricultural field on the right. The river then curves and widens, passing under mesquite and perul trees, with cobblestone road not far off to the right. Trail takes a sharp left, traveling under large mesquite trees.

Waypoint 5: Cement “pass way” at mile 1.64/ 2.64 km. Walk past divided parcels of agricultural land. At fork in trail, continue left under trees (a large arroyo will be blocking the right path). When trail forks again, travel right to border field. Where path splits under trees, follow trail to right along

cornfield and dirt road. Highway 51 can be seen on the far right.

Cement divide between two fields



Waypoint 6: At 2.04 miles/ 3.28 km, the dirt road bears right at stone structure.

The trail continues to the left and up between stone structures. Trail descends with a sharp left turn toward the river, crossing small fields beneath willow trees. At 2.33 miles/ 3.75 km, trail passes another arroyo. Traverse into riverbed at this point.

Waypoint 7: End of Section 7 and start of Section 8 at 2.43 miles/ 3.9 km. GPS coordinates: 21.061, -100.803. The trail

on riverbank above should be avoided, as it traverses into private property. Beware of dogs here, by remaining in riverbed. This location is 18.05 miles/ 29.04 km from Section 1.



Gravel extraction sign at end of trail