

Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Association East Mojave Heritage Trail



EMHT SEGMENT 1 SUPPLEMENT GUIDE

Needles to Ivanpah

ABSTRACT

Segment 1 of the vaunted East Mojave Heritage Trail. Canyons, open desert, historical sites, steep climbs and drops await the intrepid explorer.

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Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Association
East Mojave Heritage Trail
Reroutes and Guideline Supplement to the Four EMHT Guidebooks
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The East Mojave Heritage Trail created by Dennis Casebier and the Friends of the Mojave Road in the mid 1980s is a comprehensive tour through some of the most remote portions of the East Mojave Desert. In its original form, the EMHT covered 660.0 miles with four guidebooks providing historical facts, information on local flora and fauna, detailed geographic descriptions, as well as cumulative mileage along the route. With the implementation of the 1994 Desert Protection Act, and establishment of the Mojave National Preserve, numerous Wilderness Areas cut the trail in at least 13 places impacting a minimum of 75 miles – thus rendering the guidebooks useless as navigational aids – though they are still very useful for general guides and historical information.

A recent expedition remapped the EMHT to account for current wilderness boundaries and modern points of interest along or near the route. Fuel points remain the same as those called out in the books. In the interest of desert preservation and impact mitigation, in some areas the original trail was rerouted onto a more established trail where there is no meaningful difference in the overall experience. In some cases, the written supplements will recommend an optional path that may be less challenging. The EMHT gets extremely remote and rugged with multiple portions traversing little used areas of the desert. Follow all protocols and practices for travel and exploration in a remote hostile desert environment. All segments of the EMHT spend a high proportion of time in washes, flood basins, and on alluvial fans so pay close attention to, and continually monitor, weather conditions as sudden and severe flash flooding can occur without warning.

Vehicle

Vehicles should be appropriate for remote exploration and must have suitable tires (including at least one full size spare and tire repair capability), high clearance, 4WD with low range, at least one locking differential is highly recommended, and enough fuel to cover a 200-mile range in 4WD. It is not recommended that vehicles attempt the EMHT solo.

How to Use This Supplement

This supplement will serve as an insert to, and will need to be used in conjunction with, the EMHT guidebooks as it will reference the published mileage so the explorer will need to keep track of his/her own mileage during the route. In the written supplements, the term “EMHT Mile XXX.X” is referring to the mileage listed in the corresponding guidebook which will likely differ from your odometer reading. These are to be used as your reference points for keeping you on track and knowing where you are in the book and along the route. Note – using only the EMHT Guidebooks will result in a non-compliant and illegal route. You must follow the supplement directions whenever listed. In some cases, alternative or recommended routes are offered for you to make your own choice. If not listed as an alternative, then you MUST follow the directions in order to remain on the compliant route.

In this Supplement maps show the new required and/or alternate routes. The new or alternate route is clearly shown and labeled. NOTE – the maps FOLLOW after the relevant text – in some cases the text appears on a different page than the image – but you are looking for the corresponding map AFTER the text.

The EMHT Guidebooks also offer far more historical, geological, and ecological information on the areas you will be traversing and experiencing than you could ever hope to gain in a single resource on your own – they will greatly enhance your EMHT experience.

Downloads

You may download a pdf document that contains links to the MDHCA store to purchase the original books, to download the Supplements as well as GPS tracks from this link: <https://bit.ly/EMHT-Summary>

Billy’s route file is also available from <https://www.onxmaps.com>

NOTE – The Guidebooks make reference to various markers – cairns, posts, terrain features. It has been more than 30 years since this route was established and decades since travel was discontinued. As a result, many of those features and references are no longer present. You **MUST** navigate this route. There will be efforts to reestablish cairns and markers.

Supplement to EMHT Guidebook 1: Needles to Ivanpah (the BLUE book)

Logistics

- ***How to Get There:*** I-40FWY to Needles CA, exit J Street and turn NW on J St. Turn Right onto W Broadway St. Turn Left onto G St, and then immediately turn Right onto Front St. The address is: El Garces Train Station 950 Front St. Needles, CA 92363. Turn around and Start in front of the canon with your Trip Meter set to 0.
- ***Mileage:*** Original EMHT 171.6, Current EMHT 176
- ***Elevation:*** Min: 493’ Max: 5378’
- ***Pace:*** While everyone’s pace will vary, 2 full days should be considered the minimum time required, with 3+ days recommended
- ***Difficulty:*** Intermediate: Uneven, rutted dirt trail with loose rocks, sand, erosion, and washes. Potential water crossings up to a foot deep, mud holes, and obstacles up to 18”, including ledges and short, steep grades. Roads are typically one vehicle wide with places to pass.
- ***Terrain***
 - Typical open desert hard pack and scrub, narrow washes, ruts, Joshua Tree forests, mountain ranges, off-camber sections, and some steep ascents and descents
- ***Points of Interest***
 - Needles, CA, Route 66, El Garces train station (vacant)
 - Goffs Schoolhouse, Museum, and site
 - Leiser Ray Mine, Mojave Road, Rock Cabin, OX Cattle Co, Mailbox 1, Searchlight NV, Joshua Tree forest, Nipton Trading Post (great hamburger), Ivanpah site (end point)
- ***Fuel, Supplies, and Lodging***
 - Needles CA – Fuel, Food, Lodging (on route)
 - Searchlight NV – Fuel, Food, Lodging (on route)
 - Nipton CA – Food, Lodging (on route)
 - Primm NV – Food, Fuel, Lodging (off route)
- ***Side Trips***
 - Ft. Piute, Carruthers Canyon
- ***Camping***
 - The route traverses both BLM and NPS land, be aware of where you are and follow all policies, rules, and laws for each area
 - There are no established campgrounds along this segment
 - Wild camping is available pretty much anywhere along the route where permissible
 - Goffs site may be able to accommodate some camping with advanced agreement. Contact: 760-733-4482, mdhca.goffs@gmail.com <https://mdhca.org/> - There are bathrooms on site
 - Nipton Trading Post may offer camping in one of their tee-pees
 - Target Areas for wild camping: Leiser Ray Mine, Carruthers Canyon, Ivanpah site
 - Carruthers Canyon is higher elevation so is typically colder and wetter than most other areas – campsites are in a canyon protected from wind
- ***What to Expect***
 - You will leave pavement pretty quickly and once you do, go ahead and air down your tires a bit to smooth out what will be a bumpy ride

- Divorce yourself from your paint now. If you're not OK with "desert pinstripes" then don't even start the EMHT
- Three areas of Segment 1 are very remote and infrequently trafficked – The north then west leg of Eagle Pass from EMHT Mile 13 to EMHT Mile 24, the area beyond EMHT Mile 94 to Searchlight NV, and all the way back to HWY164 at Mile 144
- EMHT Mile 94 to the main Eastbound wash around EMHT Mile 117 contains some of the most technical ascents and descents of the entire EMHT, along with some narrow washes

Final Thoughts

As a final note, having done this route, please take your time, enjoy the experience and watch for desert tortoise – particularly in Spring and Summer – as they travel on the trails quite a bit. They have the right of way. If you MUST physically move a tortoise for its own safety, do so extremely slowly and cautiously. Lift only as high as needed from the sides keeping it level and only move as far as necessary. If you scare a tortoise it will expel its water supply (think peeing on you) and it will then likely die due to dehydration. Also, please leave any artifacts you find where they are. Take a photo and keep a memory.

This segment contains sensitive sites of archaeological importance, they will require additional basic research on your part to locate them. Please do not disclose these locations to others and allow them the fun of searching and finding them on their own. We do not pinpoint archaeological sites. If you are patient and observant, you will run across them. Enjoy them, photograph them, respect them, but leave them as you find them. These are irreplaceable treasures that comprise a major portion of the Mojave Desert Heritage, as well as our national history. If you think you have located an unknown site or found damage or vandalism to an existing site, document/record its location and report it to one or more of the following:

- Bureau of Land Management, Needles CA
 - Email: BLM_CA_WEB_NE@blm.gov
 - Phone: +1 (760) 326-7000
- National Park Service: Mojave National Preserve
 - Email: [David R Nichols@nps.gov](mailto:David_R_Nichols@nps.gov)
 - Phone: +1 (760) 252-6145, +1 (760) 252-6100

“The desert can be impersonally cruel or personally comforting, depending entirely on one’s approach...Love it, and it will give back in kind; resist it, and it will turn and rend you.” – June LeMert Paxton (Mojave Pioneer)

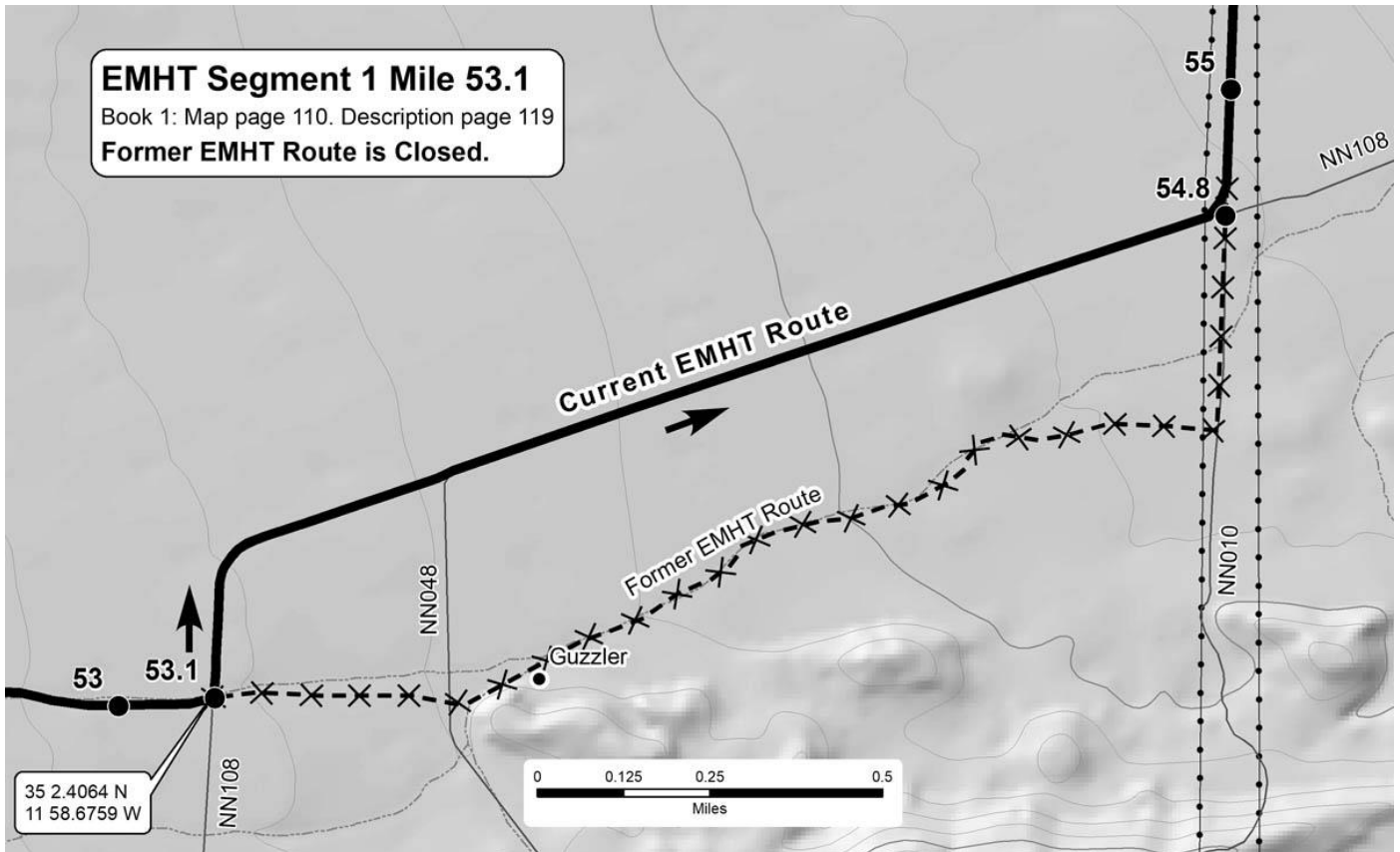
Special Acknowledgement: This guide would not have been possible without the continual input of John Marnell and Larry Vredenburg whose insights and embedded maps lend much needed clarity to this guide; along with Mike Ahrens of the Bureau of Land Management and David Nichols of the National Park Service for levels of cooperation and encouragement that few thought possible.

Disclaimer

No warranty is made as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data. MDHCA or the author(s), is not liable for any accidents, damage or injuries resulting from the use of this map or guide.

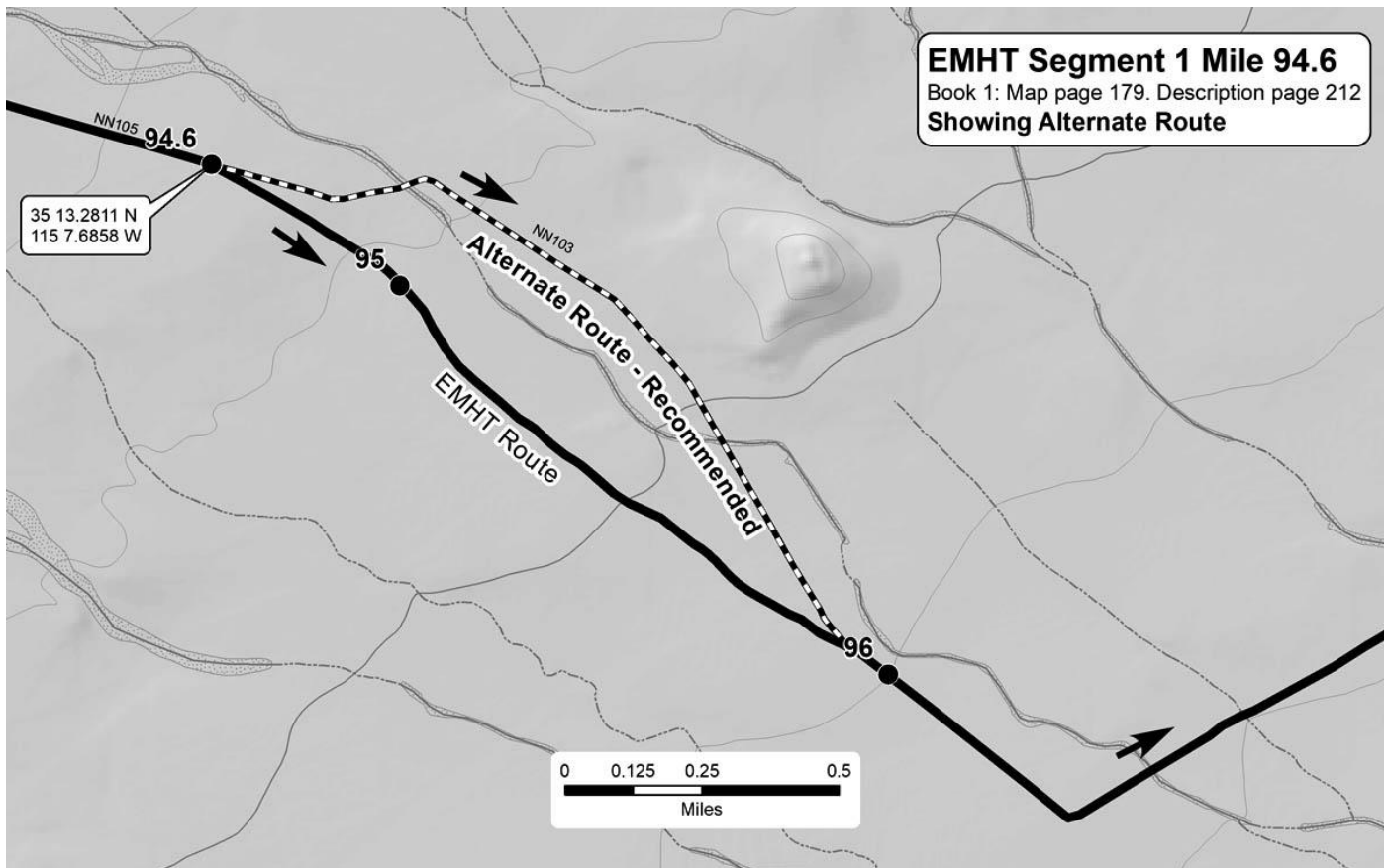
Route Changes (use in conjunction with EMHT Guidebook 1)

- EMHT Mile 53.1 – Intersect a graded main dirt road. Turn Left on this road and follow bending east then turning north. Rejoin EMHT at mile 54.8. This is not a forced reroute – it preserves the reclaimed wash and utilizes a prepared road right next to it. There is a small game guzzler nearby so WATCH FOR TORTOISE

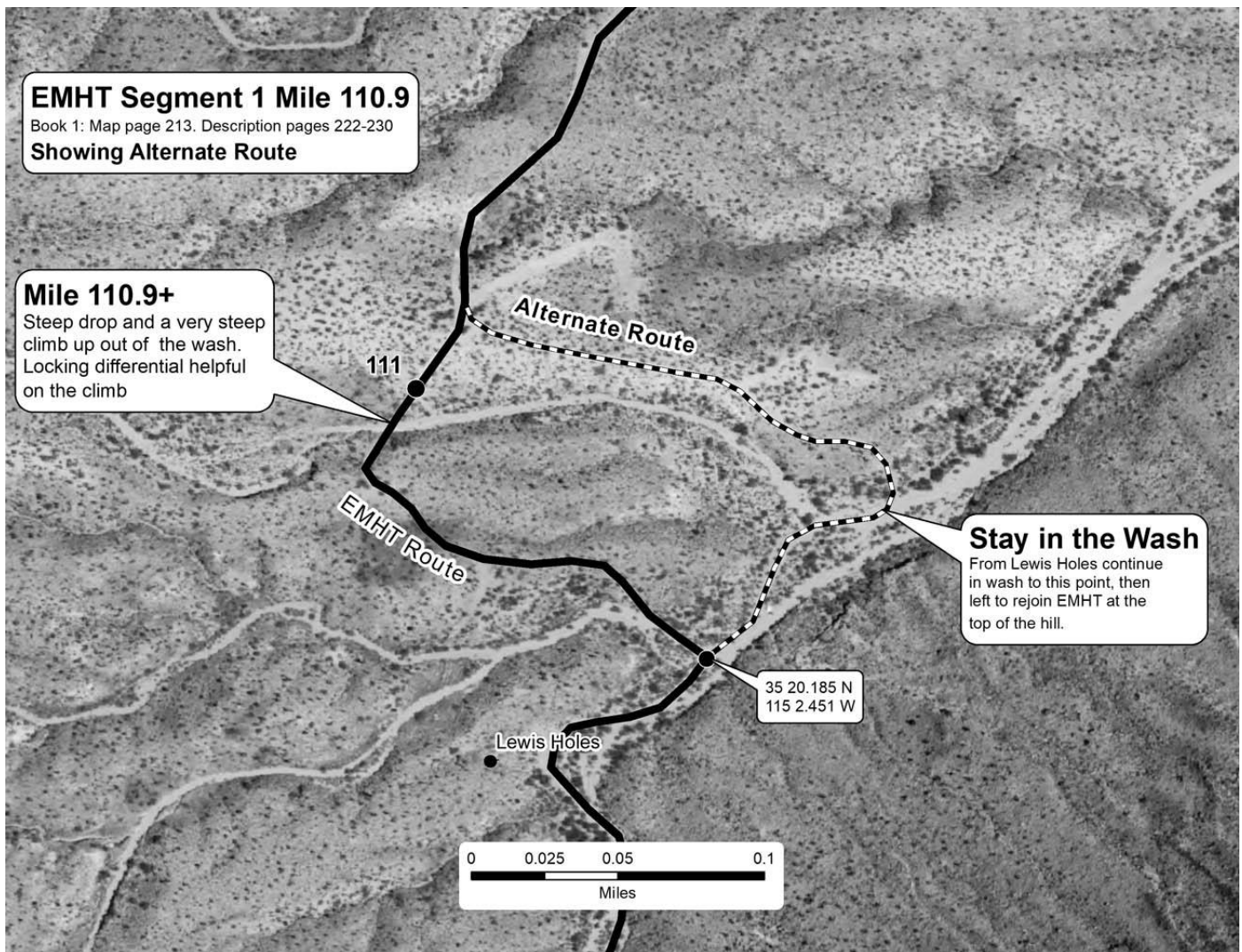


- **Side Trip to Ft. Piute**
 - Ft. Piute was a US military redoubt from 1867-1868 protecting the wagons and mail with many of the wall foundations still present. Worth the short side trip.
 - Once you turn off the utility road, the trail to Ft. Piute contains a lot of sharp rocks and will force a slower pace. Mind your tires.
 - EMHT Mile 57.6 this is the intersection with Mojave Road. For EMHT Turn LEFT. For side trip to Ft. Piute – continue straight (total distance for side trip is 3.31 miles – each way)
 - STAY ON TRAIL AS EVERYTHING WEST OF THE UTILITY CORRIDOR IS WILDERNESS AREA. ONCE YOU TURN LEFT – THIS IS A CHERRY STEM THROUGH WILDERNESS AREA. DO NOT DEVIATE FROM MAIN TRAIL
 - EMHT Mile 57.6 (intersection with Mojave Road) continue straight (north) for 1.43 miles then Bear Left
 - Proceed on this trail for 1.88 miles – arrive at Ft. Piute parking area
 - Along the way – for the first .96 miles you will be skirting the northern perimeter of Jedidiah Smith Butte
 - Retrace your route backtracking to EMHT Mile 57.6 and Turn RIGHT (west) onto Mojave Road

- **Side Trip to Carruthers Canyon** (Note the spelling of Carruthers – most maps and text have it as “Caruthers” – this is incorrect. Correct spelling is “Carruthers” so it is referenced in all of Casebier’s works this way). Carruthers Canyon penetrates about 2.8 miles into the New York Mountains and offers spectacular camping sites among granite outcrops and piñon pine trees. This is around 5600’ so expect cooler and damper conditions. This area boasts some of the earliest mining activities in the East Mojave Desert. NOTE – As you penetrate Carruthers Canyon the trail will get more technical. 4WD and High Clearance HIGHLY recommended
 - EMHT Mile 82.7 (turn hard right for EMHT), or continue straight north into the canyon
 - Proceed north on main trail. All trails heading off to the left lead to camp sites.
 - After 1.58 miles, the terrain will change to more granite outcroppings and piñon pine trees. From this point forward, the trail becomes more technical with larger rocks being encountered as you penetrate deeper into the canyon. Camping is dispersed throughout and may be on either side of the main trail.
 - Backtrack and retrace your route back to EMHT Mile 82.7 and Turn Hard LEFT onto New York Mountains Rd, resume EMHT
- NOTE – From EMHT Mile 88.4 – 117 this area is very remote and extremely rugged. Expect technical ascents and descents and narrow passages.
- EMHT Mile 94.6 – Guidebook instructs to bear RIGHT at the Y – with the LEFT being an alternate route that rejoins in 1.3 miles. The LEFT is a much more established trail and is recommended to mitigate desert impact.

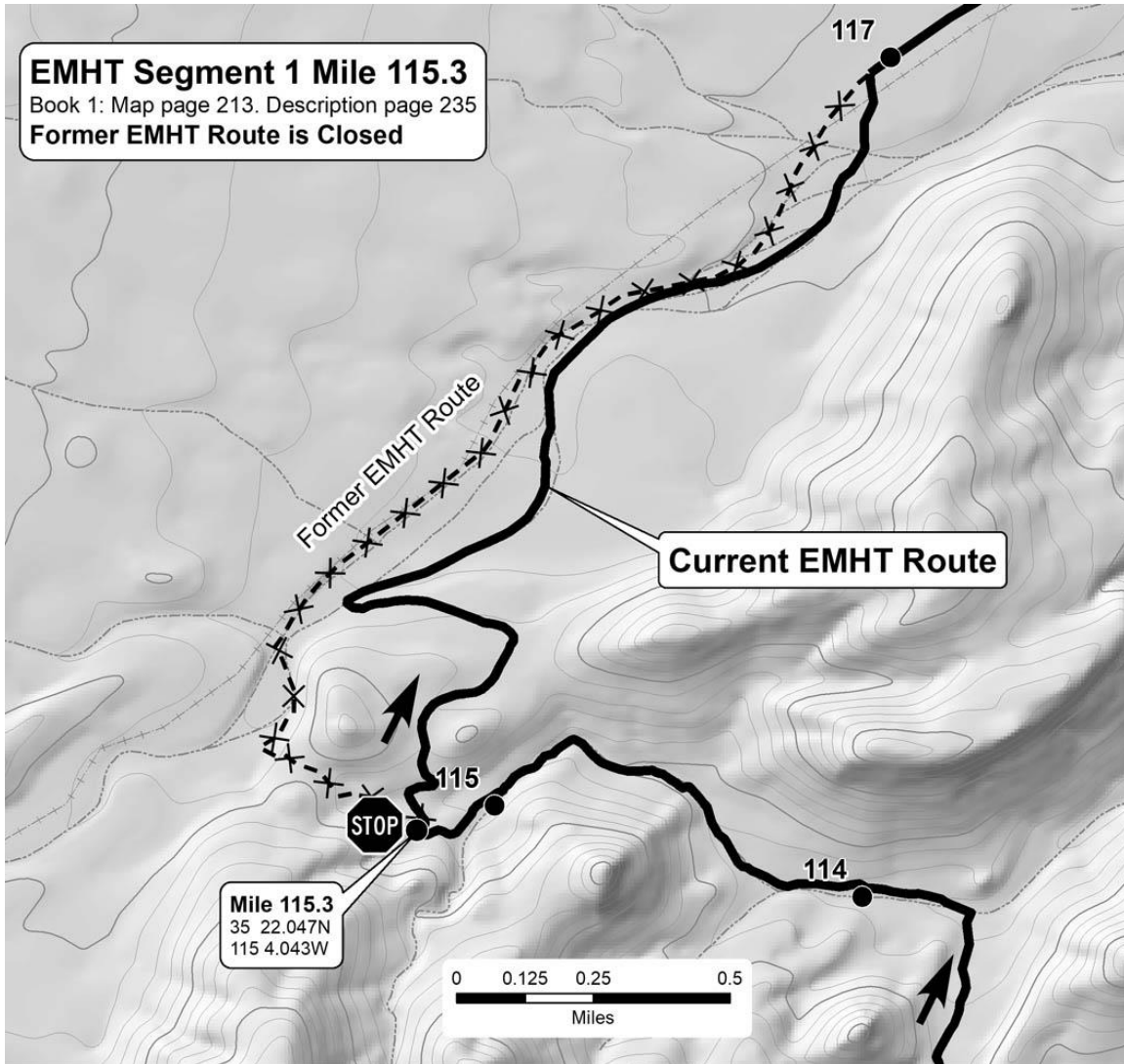


- EMHT Mile 110.8+ - this portion of the EMHT has a short but very steep descent and ascent at EMHT Mile 110.9. If you wish to take a potentially less technical alternate route, then:
 - EMHT Mile 110.8 from Lewis Holes proceed .08 mile in wash – on your left there will be another wash perpendicular to you and then immediately after a road left climbing out of the wash – TURN LEFT up the road and climb out of the wash.
 - Proceed on trail for .14 mile and intersect EMHT – TURN RIGHT to continue on EMHT at approx. EMHT Mile 111
 - NOTE – ORIGINAL EMHT ROUTE – LOCKING DIFFERENTIAL RECOMMENDED FOR THE ASCENT
 - NOTE – ALTERNATE ROUTE POTENTIALLY LESS TECHNICAL

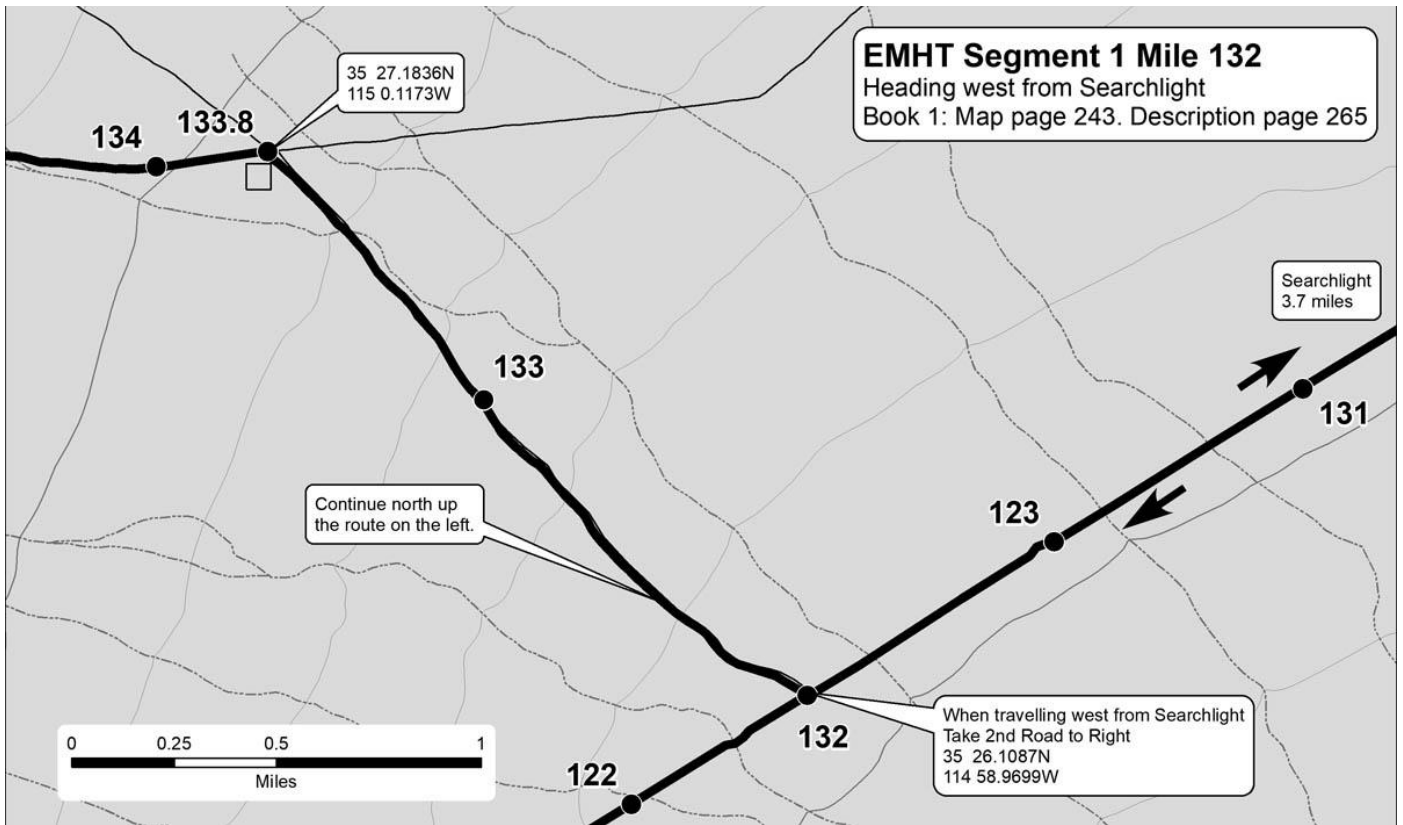


- EMHT Mile 112.9 – turn LEFT into wash and then turn immediate RIGHT out of wash.

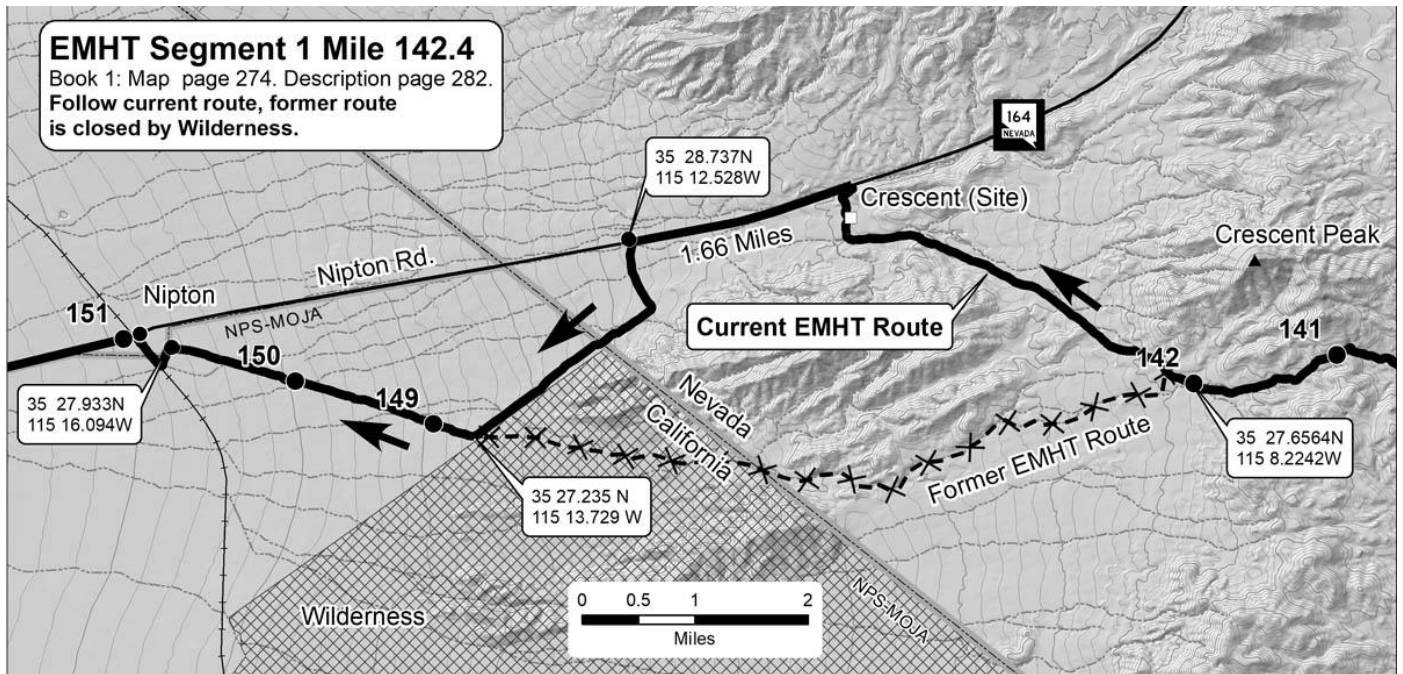
- EMHT Mile 115.3 – Original EMHT makes a HARD Turn LEFT and ignores the road coming in on the RIGHT. You MUST take the better road to the RIGHT to remain on designated trail.
 - Follow trail for approximately .7 miles to main wash.
 - At wash Turn RIGHT and pick best line EAST staying to the RIGHT or MIDDLE of the wash. The original EMHT ran on the berm to the far left but that is now CLOSED trail.
 - At EMHT Mile 116.4, where the original EMHT climbed the berm on the left – that is now CLOSED trail. Stay on the designated trail which runs along the LEFT side of the wash (but still in the wash), transitioning to a side wash/trail that intersects the original EMHT at EMHT Mile 117



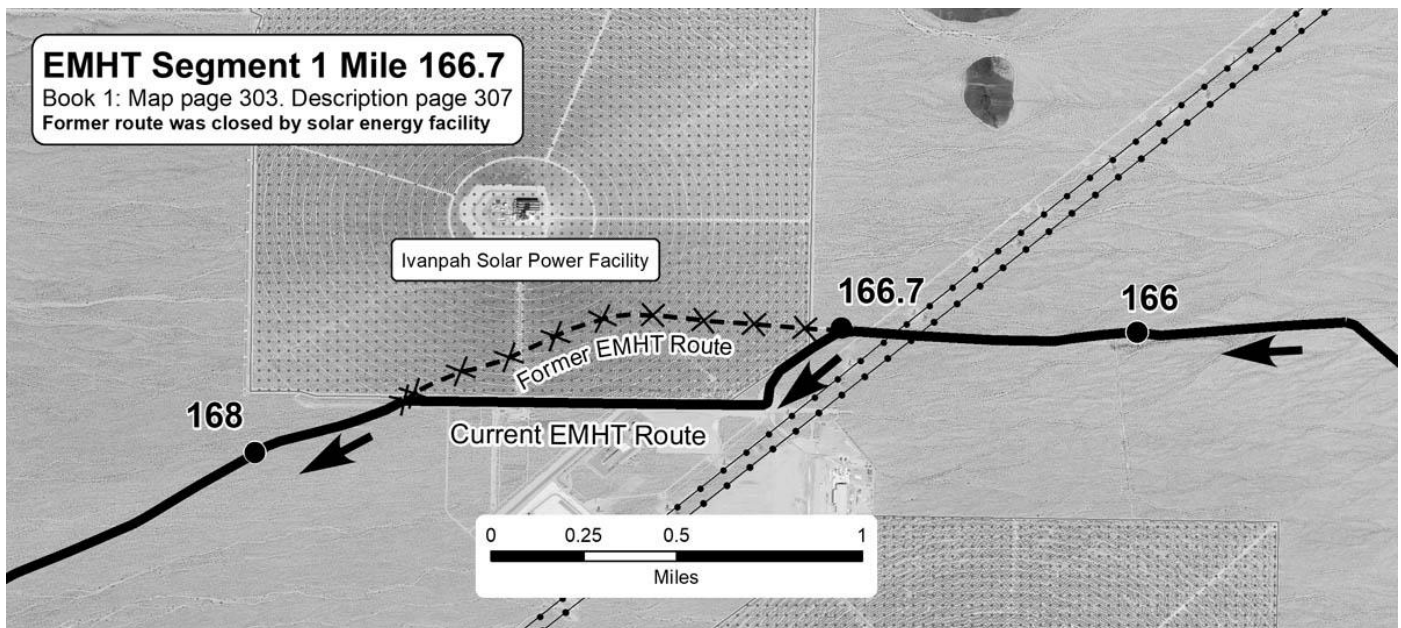
- EMHT Mile 132 – Guidebook says to Turn RIGHT onto Ranch Rd. This is still accurate EXCEPT there are now TWO roads 35 feet apart. You MUST turn RIGHT on the SECOND road as the first is now designated CLOSED trail. These will parallel each other for 1.8 miles. Rejoin EMHT at EMHT Mile 133.8



- Refer to map below for the next 4 major bullet points and 3 sub-bullet points
- EMHT Mile 142.4 – Do NOT turn hard left as that is now wilderness area. Instead, continue NORTHWEST for approximately 3.6 miles. This is a forced reroute around a Wilderness Area. You will enter an area that has commercial activity – be mindful of large trucks.
- Exit the trail onto HWY 164 and Turn Left (West) proceed for approx. 1.64 miles
 - Then TURN LEFT onto dirt trail (One Mile Rd) and proceed on main trail ignoring roads right and left.
 - .56 miles in pass under power lines and at .61 miles the trail will curve RIGHT and become powerline rd.
 - Proceed on powerline Rd for 1.73 miles and TURN RIGHT (Northwest) on faint trail rejoining EMHT at EMHT Mile 148.3
- Proceed on the trail toward Nipton for 2.36 miles, ignoring crossroad at 1.75 miles and arrive at intersection just before Nipton Campground. DO NOT ENTER CAMPGROUND
- Turn LEFT at crossroad and proceed .17 miles, then TURN RIGHT along RR Tracks for .28 miles and arrive at Nipton Trading Post rejoining EMHT at EMHT Mile 151.



- EMHT Mile 166.7 Turn Left just after crossing under powerlines and skirt the perimeter of the now present Solar Farm for .25 miles. Then Turn Right for .8 miles (solar farm on immediate right). Bear Left on Colosseum Mine Rd (dirt) rejoining the EMHT



- Directions to Ivanpah town site are a bit hazy in the Guidebook given significant changes to the mine road over the past 30 years, so they are detailed here. Primarily sustained by nearby silver mines, Ivanpah existed as a community from 1871 until the late 1890s.
 - Mileages are cumulative starting from the point you leave pavement next to the solar farm and begin on dirt road
 - 1.23 miles – cross wash
 - 1.88 miles cross a corridor
 - 2.66 miles come to Y intersection, bear RIGHT
 - 2.73 miles come to Y intersection, bear LEFT on lesser trail
 - 2.84 miles come to Y intersection, bear RIGHT
 - 2.99 miles ignore road from right
 - 3.08 miles ignore road from left - If you wish to visit the Mill Sites – take this left
 - 3.11 miles ignore road from left
 - 3.64 miles TURN LEFT toward mountain
 - 3.69 miles – arrive at Ivanpah town site
- Segment 1 ends at Ivanpah town site at EMHT Mile 171.6 (your mileage should be right around 168 (Google Earth) or 184 onX)
 - 35 32.6920N, 115 31.3207W

Congratulations on completing EMHT Segment 1