



DOME ROCK, WESTERN DIVIDE HIGHWAY & BEYOND

Sequoia National Forest Giant Sequoia National Monument

The **Western Divide Highway** on the Western Divide Ranger District is the gateway to many areas of interest. You will be traveling east about 24 miles from Springville, up Highway 190 to the 7,000 foot elevation. Hwy 190 becomes the Western Divide Highway where Forest Service Road 21S50 (the North Road) intersects. If you were to turn left/north at this intersection, you would be on the road to reach the trailhead of the **Freeman Creek Trail** (location of the President George Bush Sr. Giant Sequoia Tree), **Summit, Clicks Creek, and Lewis Camp trailheads**, all entrances to the Golden Trout Wilderness, along with **Golden Trout Wilderness Pack Station**.

If you continue on the Western Divide Highway another tenth of a mile you will come to **Quaking Aspen Campground**. Less than a mile from the campground, you will reach Forest Service Road 21S05. From there you will park and hike the remaining 2.5 miles to the Needles overlook which is popular for sightseeing and rock climbing.

Continuing south on Western Divide Highway, you will pass the community known as Ponderosa, and the **Ponderosa Lodge**. One mile further, you will reach the entrance of **Upper Peppermint Campground**, currently a free-to-use dispersed camping area. There is a vault toilet provided and a few scattered tables and fire rings, but no water other than the creek (boil 5 minutes before using). There is no garbage disposal provided, so please, if you pack it in, pack it out. A campfire permit is **REQUIRED**.

Another mile south you will see a Forest Service sign designating the **Peppermint Work Center**. During the summer months, a Fire Engine and crew as well as a Helicopter and crew are housed here for fire protection to the Golden Trout Wilderness as well as surrounding area. Visitors are normally welcome at times of non-activity. Please leave the area immediately if personnel request it, due to a fire response or other type of emergency.



Almost directly across the Western Divide Highway from the Peppermint Work Center Service Road 21S69, which will take you to Dome Rock, approximately 1/4 mile

down a well maintained dirt road from the Highway, there is an ample parking area provided with porta-potties but no water. A short, moderate hike to the top of the Dome will provide you with a spectacular view of the Needles, and many distant peaks of Sequoia National Park and Inyo National Forest, as well as the Kern River Drainage and Kern Plateau. You may also still see the effects of the 2002 McNally Fire which burned a large portion of the Kern Canyon. Please be aware that there is no guard rail and the slope of the top of Dome Rock may be deceiving, with the drop to the bottom being hundreds of feet. Parents of young children should hold them securely while visiting the top. Dome Rock is popular for rock climbing, with camping on top of the Dome or nearby, and walk or rappel down, to climb back up. Dome Rock is also a popular place for weddings, with as many as 5 per year being performed on the giant granite rock. A road is available to the top of the rock making the area handicap accessible for special events, but remains locked unless a Special Use Permit has been issued by the Forest Service. Be sure and bring your camera, for you would not want to miss this great picture-taking opportunity. Several commercials have been filmed from this giant rock, so you may recognize the scenery!

To continue on our journey, we are back in our auto continuing south on Western Divide Highway. Along the way you'll pass Horse Canyon and several viewpoints that offer views of Dome Rock and the Needles. Approximately 8 miles south of Dome Rock you will reach **Long Meadow Campground**, then another mile to **Redwood Meadow Campground**, and just beyond the parking area (a \$5 fee is charged) for **The Trail of 100 Giants**, which is a "not to be missed" opportunity to walk on an accessible trail for approximately 1.3 miles and view the Giant Sequoias close up! This is another camera must! On April 15, 2000, President William J. Clinton proclaimed the establishment of the Giant Sequoia National Monument, and made his announcement beneath one of the giant trees at the Trail of 100 Giants.



