

Quick Fall Facts

WHY OUR FALL COLOR SEASON GOES ON AND ON AND ON

The Eastern Sierra's varied elevations – from approximately 5,000 to 10,000 feet (1,512 to 3,048 m) – means the trees peak in color at different times. Bishop Creek, Rock Creek, Virginia Lakes and Green Creek typically turn color first (mid-to late September), with Mammoth Lakes, McGee Creek, Bridgeport, Conway Summit, Sonora and Monitor passes peaking next (late September), and finally June Lake Loop, Lundy Canyon, Lee Vining Canyon, Convict Lake and the West Walker River offering a grand finale from the first to third week of October. The City of Bishop shows color into early November.

TREE SPECIES

Trees that change color in the Eastern Sierra include aspen, cottonwood and willow.

LIKE CLOCKWORK

Ever wonder how Eastern Sierra leaves know to go from bright green to gold, orange and russet as soon as the calendar hits mid-September? Their cue is actually from the change in air temperature and decreased daylight.

TRUE COLORS

The reason we see fall colors is part of an annual cycle that begins in spring and summer, when green chlorophyll pigments are active in cells that make food for the tree to grow. It's during this time that leaves also contain lesser amounts of yellow, orange and red pigments masked by the chlorophyll. The occurrence of fall colors is actually the disappearance of green chlorophyll!

COLOR INTENSITY

Intensity of leaf color is determined by air temperature and moisture. Warm, dry days and cool nights (under 45°F or 7°C) mean brilliant colors; rainy days and warm nights result in less intense coloration.

COLOR PARADE

If you've ever wondered why some leaves turn deep crimson red, while others become so golden they seem to be lit from within like a lamp, here's your answer: They have pigments called xanthophylls (yellows), carotenoids (yellows, oranges and reds), and anthocyanin (red). Anthocyanin is the result of trapped plant sugar, produced by the leaf when days are sunny and nights are cold.

When and How to Get Here

FIND OUT WHEN TO "GO NOW!"

See detailed fall color reporting at www.CaliforniaFallColor.com

Follow the Eastern Sierra on Facebook:

Mono County (VisitEasternSierra)

Mammoth Lakes (VisitMammoth)

Bishop Chamber of Commerce (VisitBishop)



FLY INTO AUTUMN!

From any direction, the drive to the Eastern Sierra is worth it...but the flight connecting through LAX to Mammoth Yosemite Airport is possibly more spectacular and gets you here faster: www.AlaskaAir.com

NEED HELP PLANNING YOUR TRIP? CONTACT US:

Bishop Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

760-873-8405 www.BishopVisitor.com

690 N. Main Street • Bishop, CA 93514

County of Inyo

www.TheOtherSideOfCalifornia.com

Mammoth Lakes Tourism / Welcome Center

1-888-466-2666 or 760-924-5500

www.VisitMammoth.com

2510 Main Street • Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Mono County Tourism

1-800-845-7922 www.MonoCounty.org

Eastern Sierra Interagency Visitor Center

760-876-6200

US Hwy 395 at CA Hwy 136 • Lone Pine, CA 93545

Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center

760-647-3044

1 Visitor Center Drive • Lee Vining, CA 93541

Bridgeport Ranger Station

760-932-7070

75694 US Hwy 395 • Bridgeport, CA 93517

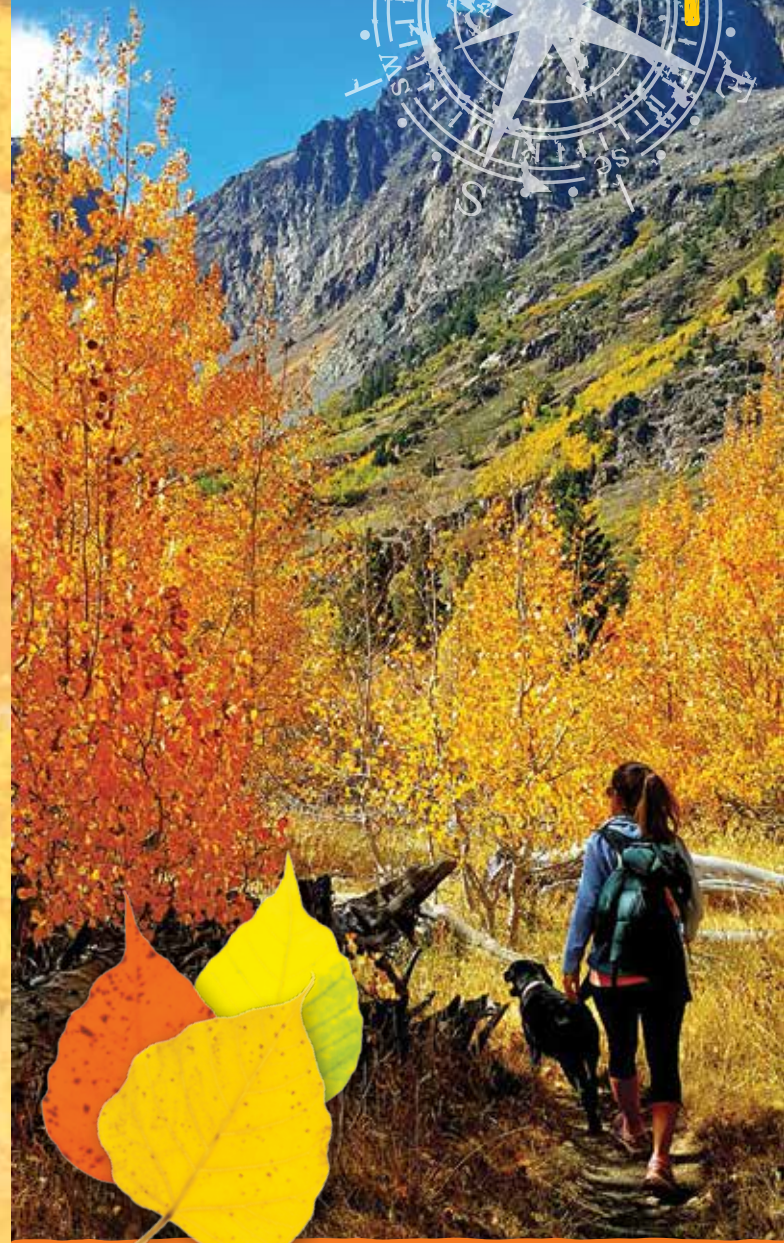
www.CaliforniaFallColor.com



COVER: LUNDY CANYON © MONO COUNTY TOURISM / LEAVES © HIBSEY - SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / LEFT: LEAF BACKGROUND © PZAKE - SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / JET © RIKKYALL / INSIDE: NORTH LAKE © ELLIOTT McCOUCHEM / DESIGN & PRODUCTION: LAURA PATTERSON DESIGN, MAMMOTH LAKES

CALIFORNIA'S EASTERN SIERRA

Fall Color Map



INYO AND MONO COUNTIES

Take your sweet time. You will need multiple days to experience everything there is to see and do – and photograph! – in the fall season here, “outside on the eastside.” A spellbinding contrast of colors makes a brilliant backdrop for classic Sunday drives, hikes, fishing, kayaking, cycling, ATVing, horseback riding, festivals and events, and so much more. Plan to spend a few days to combine fall color spots with nearby must-see attractions. For example:

-  **Big Pine Canyon #1, Bishop Creek #3, Buttermilk Country #4 and Rock Creek Fall Color #6/7** • PLUS DON'T MISS: Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest, Alabama Hills and Death Valley National Park
-  **McGee Creek Fall Color #8, Convict Lake Fall Color #9, Mammoth Lakes #10** • PLUS DON'T MISS: Mammoth Lakes Basin, Devils Postpile and Rainbow Falls
-  **Virginia Lakes #15, Green Creek Fall Color #17, Sonora Pass #19, Conway Summit #16, Twin Lakes #18** • PLUS DON'T MISS: Bodie ghost town, Buckeye and/or Travertine hot springs
-  **June Lake Loop #11, Lee Vining Canyon #13, Lundy Canyon #14, Sagehen Summit #12** • PLUS DON'T MISS: Mono Lake South Tufa, Tioga Pass Road, Yosemite National Park

OUTSIDE on the EASTSIDE

A colorful fall celebration of arts, culture and recreation

There are so many festivals, events, activities, concerts and sports competitions going on in the Eastern Sierra in the fall months, we'd need another brochure to list everything. To find out what's happening Outside on the Eastside, check out:

www.VisitMammoth.com/trip-ideas/outside-eastside-colorful-fall-celebration

www.MonoCounty.org/things-to-do/events/

www.BishopVisitor.com/events/

www.TheOtherSideOfCalifornia.com/events



Welcome to autumn in the Eastern Sierra. Welcome to brilliance. The fall season is yet another reason why US Highway 395 is designated a Scenic Byway by the State of California. The 395 corridor through the Eastern Sierra offers jaw-dropping views right from the windshield and should be on all epic road trip bucket lists, especially in the autumn. The best time to see the spectacular array of color is usually mid-September to mid-October. Savor the drive, pull over often, park and explore...and prepare to be astonished!

1 BIG PINE CANYON

Scenic drive: Head west on Glacier Lodge Road; the journey starts in scrub and sage, winding its way from the valley floor up Big Pine Creek until the road ends near the old Glacier Lodge. The road winds upward from 4,000 to 8,000 feet with aspen, cottonwood and willows hugging the sides of the creek and canyon walls. **Tip:** Hike farther up the canyon for grand alpine scenery and views of the Palisade Glacier, the southernmost glacier in North America.

2 CITY OF BISHOP

Scenic drive: Head east from US 395 toward the Owens River, where large stands of cottonwood grace the valley floor with brilliant gold. **Tip:** Visit the Bishop City Park for a morning stroll or afternoon picnic. It's an arboretum with dozens of colorful trees and a picture perfect pond that's home to mallard ducks and rainbow trout.

3 BISHOP CREEK CANYON

Scenic drive: Just 20 minutes from Bishop, Lake Sabrina, South Lake and North Lake offer gorgeous views of surrounding 13,000' peaks dusted with snow for contrasting beauty. **Tip:** Check out the waterfall across the road from Bishop Creek Lodge. **Tip:** Rent a boat at Sabrina Lake or South Lake to fish and capture unforgettable photos.

4 BUTTERMILK RECREATION AREA

Scenic drive: 7 miles west of downtown Bishop via Highway 168, you'll find the road to Buttermilk Recreation Area. It's a beautiful place to soak up sun among giant boulders and rock formations. Dozens of dirt roads zigzag throughout this world famous rock climbing destination, where stands of aspen cluster around streams. **Fun Fact:** "The Buttermilks" were named during the 1800s when ranchers from the north brought their goat milk to sell to Bishop residents; the bumpy road turned the milk into buttermilk.

5 ROUND VALLEY

Scenic drive: Tour this historic ranching area by car for awesome views of Wheeler Crest, Mt. Tom and Bishop Creek Canyon. Round Valley's huge cottonwoods and poplars hold their fall colors late into the season. **Tip:** Good hiking trails are available in Pine Creek Canyon and Lower Rock Creek Road.

6 LOWER ROCK CREEK

Scenic hike: Just south of Tom's Place, the trailhead is at the top of Lower Rock Creek Road. The first and highest section of the multi-use trail offers the best display of creekside aspen groves. **Tip:** Mountain bikers, hikers and anglers all share this trail.

7 ROCK CREEK CANYON

Scenic drive: The nine-mile road (14.5 k) that slices through this glacier-carved canyon is lined with aspen stands, campgrounds, rustic lodges, trails and Rock Creek itself – making it a gorgeous autumn drive. **Tip:** The Little Lakes Valley Trail at the end of Rock Creek Road is popular for good reason; hikers should arrive early for parking.

8 MCGEE CREEK CANYON

Scenic hike: A steady climb, the trail to the beaver pond winds along McGee Creek and through brilliant aspen groves. **Tip:** Horseback riding trips are available with McGee Creek Pack Station.

9 CONVICT LAKE

Easily accessible by car, this vivid blue lake is a perfect contrast to bright gold aspens. The hiking trail around Convict Lake provides a great fall color excursion for families. **Tip:** Convict Lake Resort has overnight cabin rentals, boats for rent, horseback rides and an excellent restaurant.

10 MAMMOTH LAKES

During fall, Mammoth Lakes brims with glowing leaves. Here are some top spots – **Sherwin Creek/Mammoth Creek:** Check out natural solitude at the Sherwin Creek camping area and hiking trails, accessible by a dirt road off Sherwin Creek Road. **Mammoth Lakes Basin:** Relax in the setting of five renowned fishing lakes just minutes from the center of town. Various hiking trails allow for quick elevation gain over the basin. **Mammoth Scenic Loop:** A wonderful scenic drive with the option for an easy side trip to Inyo Craters. **Reds Meadow:** When you're in the mood for a full day excursion, Reds Meadow is a must-see with Devils Postpile National Monument, Rainbow Falls and the San Joaquin River. **Tip:** No need to figure out your day. Have Mammoth All Weather Shuttle Tours take you on a sightseeing trip.

11 JUNE LAKE LOOP

Scenic drive: Especially amazing in fall, "The Loop"/Highway 158 is the quintessential autumn drive featuring waterfalls, four lakes, Rush Creek and a charming village. **Tip:** Hike the family-friendly Gull Lake Trail or the colorful trail to Parker Lake.

12 SAGEHEN SUMMIT

Scenic drive: South off Highway 120 East, Sagehen Meadows Road is a wide, well-graded dirt road surrounded by dense aspen groves that usually turn deep orange and crimson. **Tip:** Beyond Sagehen Meadows viewpoint, the dirt road network requires an Inyo National Forest map and a 4WD vehicle.

13 LEE VINING CANYON

Scenic drive: Highway 120 West to Tioga Pass – and Yosemite National Park's east entrance – has dramatic views of Lee Vining Canyon, graced with aspen groves. **Tip:** Be sure to visit the South Tufa State Reserve at Mono Lake, a sanctuary for millions of migrating birds.

14 LUNDY CANYON

Scenic drive: A scenic fall drive, Lundy Canyon Road ends at a popular hiking trail, where the view of Lundy Falls surrounded with colorful aspens appears within the first mile. **Tip:** Hikers should arrive early to find parking.

Mountain Manners

Like all parents, Mother Nature loves good manners! Here are a few Mountain Manners* etiquette tips to help protect the Eastern Sierra:

MANNER #1: Follow the Beaten Path

Straying from designated paths can cause harmful erosion, so we ask you to take the road *most* traveled (with apologies to Robert Frost).

MANNER #2: Scoop the Poop

Your #2 is becoming our #1 issue. If it's your pet's, please pick it up! If it's your own, bury your business 6-8 inches or better yet, pack it out.

MANNER #3: Don't Mess with Fire

Follow all fire regulations and make sure your campfire is completely out before you leave it. Don't build a fire in windy conditions; trust us – one spark can destroy it all.

MANNER #5: Gather Up Garbage

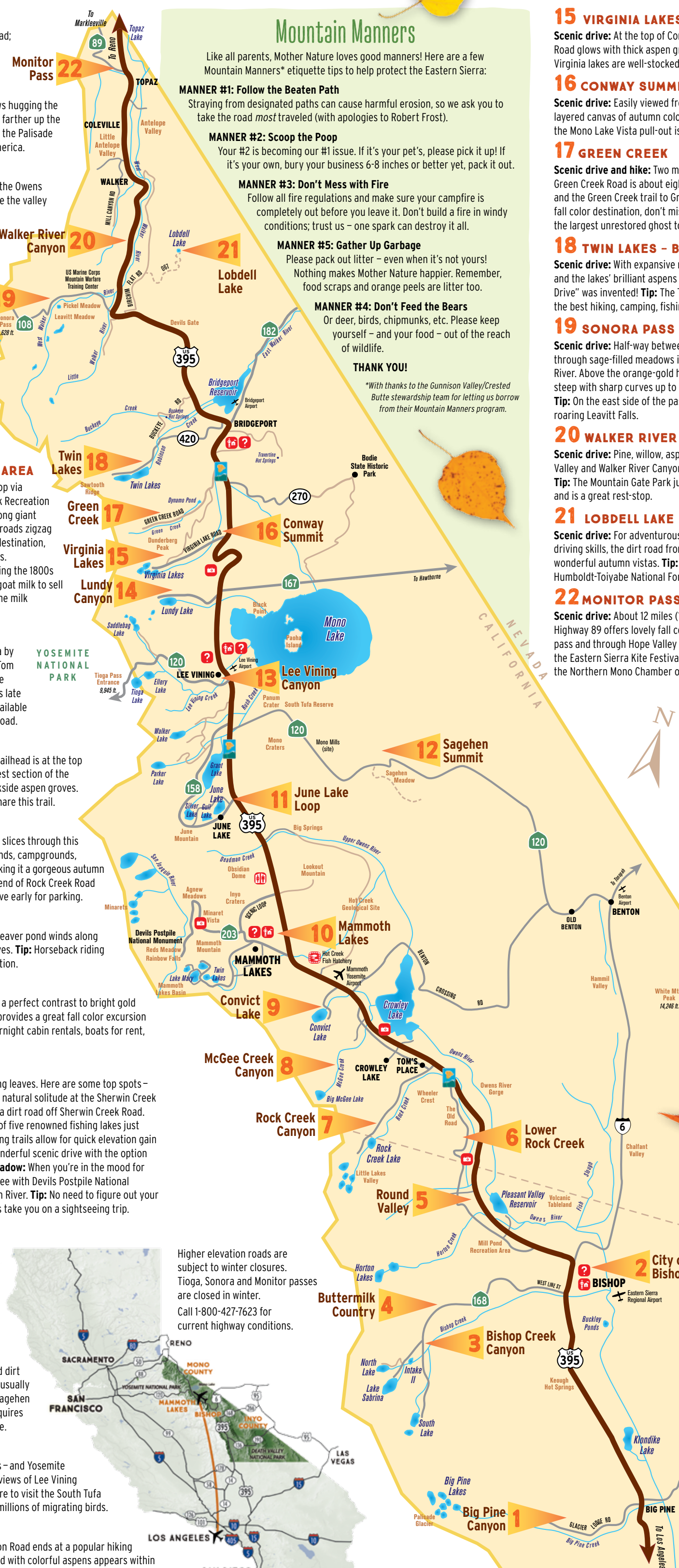
Please pack out litter – even when it's not yours! Nothing makes Mother Nature happier. Remember, food scraps and orange peels are litter too.

MANNER #4: Don't Feed the Bears

Or deer, birds, chipmunks, etc. Please keep yourself – and your food – out of the reach of wildlife.

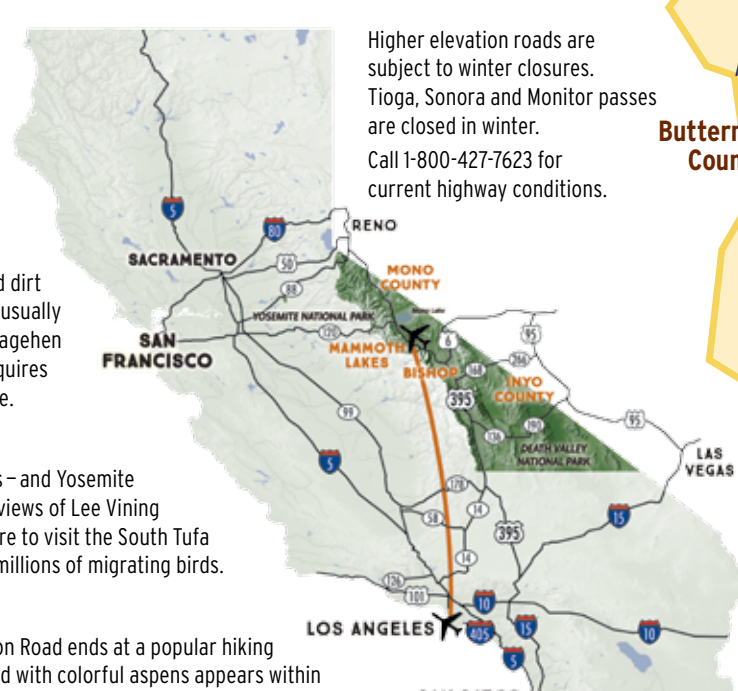
THANK YOU!

*With thanks to the Gunnison Valley/Crested Butte stewardship team for letting us borrow from their Mountain Manners program.



Legend

- US 395
- Paved Roads and Highways
- Unpaved Roads
- Rough Road – 4WD Only
- Visitor Center
- Ranger Station
- Roadside Rest
- Scenic Vista
- Fish Hatchery
- Commercial Service Airport
- General Aviation Airport
- State Scenic Highway



Higher elevation roads are subject to winter closures. Tioga, Sonora and Monitor passes are closed in winter. Call 1-800-427-7623 for current highway conditions.

