

White Water Canyon Road Log

Begin side trip by turning right (N) on White Water Canyon Rd. Drive to the Whitewater Trout Farm where the pavement ends. Then turn around and retrace your path to Whitewater Cut Off.

miles *delta*

- 0.0** Drive north on Whitewater Canyon Road. Exposed on either side of the canyon at road level are gray stratified Quaternary gravel deposits of the ancestral Whitewater River which were laid down between 0.5 - 0.75 My ago. Capping the bluffs is a rust-colored topsoil.
- 1.4** *1.4* Crest small hill and pull off right. Here we have a clear view of the Banning Fault's path across Whitewater Canyon. To the left (W) we see the contrast between the nearby light colored hill to the south composed of Cabazon Fanglomerate and the darker Coachella Fanglomerate just across the cleft to the north. The same scene can be seen on the east side of the canyon, though it is more complex owing to an exposure of the sheared rusty rocks of Painted Hill just south of the darker, domed mountain. There is also a good deal of reddish gouge to the right (E). Looking up the wash we see a thick stand of trees and brush in Bonnie Bell. This localized vegetation is on the fault and, as in Seven Palms Canyon and Indio Hills, is a sure sign of ground water damming by the fault. Also see obvious color contrast at Banning fault to the northwest.
- 1.5** *0.1* Enter Bonnie Bell. The Banning fault crosses the lumpy road at the dips and curves (33 56.705 116 38.529 1633 ft).
- 4.1** *2.6* Cross Whitewater River. Here we see banded gray and brown bedding showing rounded holes of cavernous erosion. The light gray gneissic cobbles and boulders in the wash with layers of greenish epidote contrast strongly with the surrounding hills. Most of them are diorite gneiss eroded from many miles up-canyon.
- 4.7** *0.6* Whitewater Trout Co. Turn around and retrace the route to Whitewater Cut Off. On the way down we have a magnificent view of the 10,000 ft San Jacinto escarpment, one of the highest and steepest in North America. Our line-of-site reaches south from the Transverse Ranges geomorphic province into the northern end of the Peninsular Ranges province. Those rocks across the canyon ahead have an entirely different origin than the ones we are drive through. As we approach Whitewater Cut Off, we see steep bluffs of the river, sand dunes at the foot of the San Jacinto escarpment, rows of wind generators and I-10. This is one of the most bizarre, dramatic sights on the trip.
- 9.4** *4.7* Junction Whitewater Canyon Road and Whitewater Cutoff. Rejoin main route by turning right (W) on Whitewater Cut Off.

Banning Fault Through Bonnie Bell



33 55.931 116 38.034 1687 ft

