

There's a Ranger Station?

Yes, in fact there is a Ranger Station in Whiting Ranch! But finding it may be bit of a challenge because it's hidden away. And even if you find it you may find it locked up as the rangers might be out on the trail. Even still, if you find yourself in the neighborhood it's worth the extra side trip to check it out. The ranger station is really an old converted ranch house, the Historic McFadden Ranch House to be exact. This ranger station also houses a Nature Center, complete with historical artifacts, taxidermy animals native to the area and more. But like I mentioned earlier, the ranger station is not always open, so it's best to call first (949.923.2245) to arrange a time to visit either the rangers or the Nature Center. If you do stop by and find yourself locked out – you might still be in luck (depending on the season) by picking yourself some fresh oranges from the small grove out front. The oranges are free for the picking, but please take only what you want to sit and eat right then. Leave the rest for other visitors.

So you want to know where it is and how to get there? Well, it's a bit of a challenge to find the place. The ranger station is located just off the Aliso Creek Bikeway, on the stretch that runs along El Toro Road between Glenn Ranch Road and Ridgeline Road (if you see the Cooks Corner cafe/biker hangout you are very near). Once on the bike path, look for a sign and a path that leads you through some trees and across a small bridge. If you made it this far, you've made it! The preferred way to get there is either by bicycle, walking, running, equestrian, etc., because there is no way to drive to the ranger station. In addition to the driving restriction, nearby parking is limited (or should I just say not near by...). Perhaps the best place to park is along the eastern end of Ridgeline Road, then walk down El Toro to the Aliso Creek Bikeway. Or you could park along the eastern end of Glenn Ranch Road and do the same thing (i.e.; walk over the bridge on Glenn Ranch Road and then down the ramp to the bikeway and proceed north. It's like hunting for hidden treasure! Or as Huell Howser would say: "California Gold"...