Death Valley National Park’s new Superintendent Mike Reynolds has gotten off to a “stormy” start. He had been working at Death Valley National Park for just four months when the rains of October started. Flash flooding on October 4, 2015, damaged roads and trapped visitors at Furnace Creek for several hours. Roads were cleared, but more rains brought additional flooding. Then the big one hit. On the night of October 18, 3.5 inches of rain fell in Grapevine Canyon—more than the average rainfall for the entire year. A massive flood swept through the Death Valley Scotty’s Historic District, leaving behind mud and debris and destroying the roads that lead to Scotty’s Castle.

For Reynolds, it was déjà vu all over again. On September 29, 2009, Reynolds was beginning his workday as Superintendent of the National Park of American Samoa in the South Pacific Ocean, when a powerful tsunami swept ashore. Reynolds and most of his staff ran up hill and watched as wave after wave devastated the island and park. In the coming weeks and months, he coordinated the recovery and rebuilding of infrastructure in the aftermath of this tragedy. With this experience, Superintendent Reynolds is uniquely qualified to lead the recovery efforts after Death Valley’s October floods.

Reynolds first worked at Death Valley 15 years ago, and fell in love with its wide open vistas and secret canyons. “It’s a great place for me personally because of my passion for hiking. Death Valley offers endless opportunities to explore,” said Superintendent Reynolds. “Professionally, I feel I can have a greater impact here than at other, more heavily visited parks. The staff is small enough that everyone gets to pitch in during emergencies. We all get a broader experience working together as a team.”

Reynolds notes that 2016 is the Centennial of the National Park Service. “Having the opportunity to live and work in these special places is such a privilege,” he said. “I have a lifelong goal of visiting all 408 National Park Service units—I’m currently up to 302. But even for those parks that I will never visit, the system as a whole is a valuable legacy for future generations.”

Although repairing infrastructure and reopening Scotty’s Castle are important tasks at Death Valley, rangers have planned special events and activities throughout the Centennial year. Ask a ranger or check the website and park bulletin boards to see what’s happening during your visit.
Support Your Park

Rules to Live By in Your National Park

Many park rangers are federal law enforcement officers. They help protect the park and its visitors by enforcing a wide range of federal, state and local regulations. You can help them by observing these laws:

• Obey the speed limit and other rules of the road.
• Rocks, plants, animals, and historic objects in Death Valley are protected just like in a museum. Vandalsm and theft are prohibited.
• Let wild animals find their own food. They're good at it and feeding them is against the law.
• Keep your car on established roads. Unsightly tire tracks in the desert destroy fragile plants and wildlife and scar the landscape for decades.
• Camp only in established campgrounds or in a permitted backcountry area. Check at a ranger station or visitor center for backcountry camping information.
• It is illegal to discharge a firearm anywhere in Death Valley or to bring one into a federal building.
• Keep pets on leash and close to roads or parking lots. Pets are not allowed on trails or in wilderness.
• Stay out of closed areas. Mines, service roads, and other areas are closed for your safety or the protection of features therein.
• Put garbage where it belongs. Litter in the desert spoils the landscape for each person that follows behind you.
• Campfires are allowed in established firepits only. Gathering firewood is prohibited.
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• Campfires are allowed in established firepits only. Gathering firewood is prohibited.

Entrance Fees

Pay the park entrance fee at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center, Scotty’s Castle Visitor Center, Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station or at one of the automated fee machines placed throughout the park.

7-day pass
Vehicle and passengers............... $20
Individual entering on motorcycle, bicycle, or foot.................. $10

Annual Pass
Death Valley Annual Pass.............. $40
Interagency Annual Pass.............. $80
Interagency Military Pass.............. free (for active duty military and dependents)

Lifetime Pass
Interagency Senior Pass............... $10 (for U.S. citizens 62+)
Interagency Access Pass............... free (for U.S. citizens with disability)

Other passes honored
Interagency Annual Pass.............. $80
Interagency Military Pass.............. free (for active duty military and dependents)

Death by a Million Cuts

With about a million people visiting Death Valley each year, every little action is multiplied. If each visitor did a seemingly harmless thing like stacking stones, scratching their name in the mud, picking a wildflower, collecting a rock, or feeding a coyote, the cumulative effect can be devastating. Help protect America’s national parks by leaving everything in its place and not defacing the natural and cultural resources. Other park visitors and future generations will thank you.

Ephemeral Vandalism

Cairns are stacks of rocks often used to mark hiking routes in the desert, but in the narrows of Golden Canyon, cairns are not necessary to find your way. These visitor-built cairns were assembled one at a time over a single week, by dozens of visitors. Most likely, they were built as monuments to their visit...and because someone else had already built one. “If we make only one, what harm could it do?”

Native rock nettle in Titus Canyon

Wildlife Sightings

Around the world, visitors to remote locations are providing important data to researchers by their observations. Your personal observations of wildlife can be very valuable. Death Valley National Park is compiling a database to hold visitor data and allow us to develop distribution maps of wildlife throughout the park.

Two species of special interest are the Nelson’s bighorn sheep and desert tortoise, but other wildlife species observations are also welcome. Please be as accurate as possible and include your contact information. Photos provide great information and are always appreciated. Please fill out a wildlife sighting form available at any visitor center or ranger station.
Five Injured in Single-Vehicle Rollover Accident

One evening in July, park rangers responded to a report of a single-vehicle rollover accident near the Golden Canyon Trailhead. Rangers arriving on scene observed five patients with varying levels of injuries. Two patients were suffering from only minor injuries and refused transport to a hospital. The other three were transported by NPS ambulance to Desert View Regional Medical Center in Pahrump, Nevada.

A subsequent investigation showed that the driver had become momentarily distracted and overcorrected when he felt the vehicle’s tires hit the travel road shoulder. The corrective action caused the vehicle to leave the roadway at a high rate of speed, rolling twice before coming to rest on the desert floor.

Dozens of these accidents occur in Death Valley every year, and are the single leading cause of fatalities in the park. Without cell service in the park, it is not uncommon for an hour or more to elapse before emergency responders arrive at the scene of an accident. By observing the speed limit and staying focused on the road, visitors can avoid becoming victims of these tragic accidents.

Backcountry Travel: Read This Before You Go!

You’ve got two flat tires. Your cell phone doesn’t work. Nobody knows where you are. You’re not sure where you are. You haven’t seen another car since you turned off the highway 12 hours ago. The only thing you can hear is the ringing in your ears. Is this how you thought it would end?

Most backcountry emergencies begin in fairly commonplace ways: your car gets a flat tire, you run out of gas, you sprain your ankle while on a hike, or you get disoriented and turned around in the desert landscape.

No matter what kind of adventure or experience you pursue in Death Valley, a little planning and caution will send you home with happy and fun-filled memories of your desert trip. Have a safe and inspiring visit to Death Valley by following these tips from the rangers:

- Plan your visit. Do you have the appropriate vehicle, tires, tools, camping gear, maps, and skills for your intended route? Do you have enough fuel and water? If you aren’t sure, ask a ranger.
- Be prepared. If you’re headed into the backcountry, plan on changing a flat tire at least once. Check your rental car contract to see if your car is covered should something happen to your car on an unpaved road.
- Have the necessary tools (rental cars often lack the proper tire changing tools!) and know how to use them.
- Bring food, water and other essentials for several days, even if you’re planning a much shorter visit.
- Don’t rely on technology. Your cell phone won’t work in most of the park. Emergency locator beacons have a high failure rate. GPS devices frequently tell Death Valley visitors to turn off well-traveled roads, and take “shortcuts” over the desert and into isolated canyons. Common sense and good judgment are far more reliable.
- Call someone at home and tell them specifically where you are going. Have them call 1-888-233-6518 (Emergency Dispatch) if you do not return when expected. It takes a long time to search 3.4 million acres of wilderness. We can find you faster if we know where to look and what we’re looking for. Complete a backcountry hiker form at any visitor center to ensure that we have all the information needed to find you quickly.

Survive!

Personal Survival in a Land of Extremes

- Water: Drink at least one gallon (4 liters) of water per day to replace loss from perspiration. Carry plenty of extra drinking water in your car.
- Heat & Dehydration: If you feel dizzy, nauseous or get a headache, get out of the sun immediately and drink plenty of water. Dampen clothing to lower your body temperature. Heat and dehydration can kill.
- Hiking: Do not hike in the low elevations when temperatures are hot.
- Dangerous Creatures: Never place your hands or feet where you cannot see first. Rattlesnakes, scorpions, or black widow spiders may be sheltered there.
- Mine Hazards: Do not enter mine tunnels or shafts. Mines may be unstable, have hidden shafts, pockets of bad air and poisonous gas. Stay Out Stay Alive.
- Flash Floods: Avoid canyons during rain storms and be prepared to move to higher ground. While driving, be alert for water running in washes and across the road. Water can carry rocks and debris with it and may suddenly appear around the next curve in the roadway.
- In Case of Emergency: Dial 911 from any telephone or cell phone. Cell phones may not work in many parts of the park. Do not depend on them.

Hantavirus

Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) is a rare but frequently fatal respiratory disease that occurs throughout the United States and is caused by a virus spread to humans through contact with the urine, droppings, or saliva of infected rodents.

In Death Valley National Park, deer mice, cactus mice, and woodrats/packrats may carry the virus. Cabins and other abandoned structures are likely habitat for rodents and potential sites where visitors may be exposed to the virus. It is transmitted to people when they breathe air contaminated with the virus, touch their mouth or nose after handling contaminated materials, eat contaminated food, or are bitten by a rodent. Anyone who comes into contact with rodents that carry hantavirus is at risk of HPS.

How can HPS be prevented?
- Do not use structures if you find signs of rodent droppings, nests and burrows.
- Do not clean cabins or other structures - stirring up dust increases the potential of inhalation.
- Air out cabins and other structures for at least 2 hours before occupying them.
- Do not disturb rodents’ burrows, nests or dens.
- Avoid camping near rodent droppings, nests, woodpiles or dense brush frequented by rodents.
- Wash or sanitize hands if you contact rodents or their excretions.
- Store food in rodent-proof containers.
- Promptly dispose of all garbage to avoid attracting rodents.
Furnace Creek Area

- **Badwater Basin**: The lowest point in North America, Badwater Basin is a surreal landscape of vast salt flats. A temporary lake may form here after heavy rainstorms. Do not walk on the salt flats in hot weather. Wheelchair accessible.

- **Aguereberry Point**: Features among the best preserved remains of Pete Aguereberry's camp and his Eureka Mine. Along the gravel road are the remains of Pete Aguereberry’s camp and his Eureka Mine. The last climb to the point may require a high-clearance vehicle.

- **Artists’ Drive**: A scenic loop drive through multi-hued volcanic and sedimentary hills. Artist’s Palette is especially photogenic in late afternoon light. The 9 mile paved road is one-way and is only drivable with vehicles less than 25 feet in length.

- **Dante’s View**: The most breathtaking viewpoint in the park, this mountain top overlook is more than 5000 feet above the floor of Death Valley. The paved access road is open to all vehicles less than 25 feet in length.

- **Devil’s Golf Course**: An immense area of rock salt eroded by wind and rain into jagged spires. So incredibly serrated that “only the devil could play golf on such rough links.” The unpaved road leading to it is often closed after rain.

- **Harmony Borax Works**: Follow an easy 1/4 mile walking trail to learn about this important site in Death Valley’s history. The Harmony Borax operation became famous through the use of 20 mule teams that moved borax from Death Valley to nearby communities.

- **Twenty Mule Team Canyon**: Winding through otherworldly badlands, this 2.7 mile, one-way loop drive is unpaved, but accessible to vehicles other than buses, RV’s, and trailers.

- **Salt Creek**: This stream of salty water is the only home to a rare pupfish, Cyprinodon salinus. Springtime is best for viewing pupfish; in summer the lower stream dries up and in winter the fish are not as active. The wooden boardwalk loops 5 mile through stands of pickleweed and past pools reflecting badland hills. Wheelchair accessible.

- **Titus Canyon**: The largest and most diverse canyon in the park. Within its lofty walls visitors can find volcanic deposits, a ghost town, Indian petroglyphs, bighorn sheep, and deep, winding narrows. Titus Canyon is accessible to high-clearance vehicles via a 26 mile, one-way dirt road beginning outside the park. The trip will take 3 hours from pavement to pavement.

- **Ubehebe Crater**: A 600 foot deep crater remained. Just a few hundred years ago a massive volcanic explosion caused by magma mixing with an underground spring, shattered the silence of northern Death Valley. When the cinders and dust settled, this 600 foot deep crater remained. Although easily visible from the paved road, hikers may want to circle the crater rim to see smaller craters.

- **Devil’s Golf Course**: An immense area of rock salt eroded by wind and rain into jagged spires. So incredibly serrated that “only the devil could play golf on such rough links.” The unpaved road leading to it is often closed after rain.

Scotty’s Castle Area

- **Scotty’s Castle**: CLOSED DUE TO FLOOD DAMAGE. Prospector “Death Valley Scotty” claimed this elaborate Spanish-style mansion was built by gold from his fictitious mine. In reality, it was the 1920s vacation home of his wealthy friends. Once re-opened, living history tours of the castle’s richly furnished interior are given by costumed park rangers. Wheelchair accessible.

- **Eureka Dunes**: Rising nearly 700 feet these are the highest dunes in California. Isolated from other dunes, they are an evolutionary island, home to rare and endangered species of plants and animals. To give them extra protection, the dunes are off limits to sandboarding and horseback riding. The drive can be rough and will take approximately 2.5 hours from the end of pavement off of Scotty’s Castle Road.

- **The Racetrack**: Rocks mysteriously slide across the dry lakebed of the Racetrack, leaving behind long tracks for visitors to ponder. A high-clearance vehicle with heavy-duty tires is needed to traverse the 27 miles of rough dirt road; ask a ranger for current road conditions. Once you leave pavement at Ubehebe Crater the drive will take approximately 2.5 hours one-way to the Racetrack.
**Walks & Hikes**

- Before starting a hike, learn the current conditions, water availability, and weather forecasts. Backpackers can obtain a free permit from any visitor center.
- Always carry water. Two liters for a short winter hike; 4 liters or more in the summer or for longer hikes.
- Dogs and bicycles are not allowed on trails or in the Wilderness.

**Trails & Routes**

**Golden Canyon Trail**

- **Length:** 1 mile, one-way.
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Start:** Golden Canyon parking area, 2 miles south of Hwy 190 on Badwater Road.
- **Description:** Easy trail through colorful canyon. Can be overgrown and lush vegetation tucked into a narrow, polished marble-walled canyon. Can be dangerous when it is hot. The high peaks can be covered with snow in winter and spring. The best time to hike in the park is October to April.

**Badvater Salt Flat**

- **Length:** ½ mile to edge, 5 mi. across
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Start:** Badwater parking area, 17 miles south of Hwy 190 on Badwater Road.
- **Description:** Level walk across lowest place in the western hemisphere. Crust of salt crystals may be covered with temporary lake after rain storm. Walk out for muddy areas. No trail. Do not hike this area during hot months.

**Dante’s Ridge**

- **Length:** ½ mile to first summit, 4 miles one-way to Mt. Perry
- **Difficulty:** Moderate
- **Start:** Dante’s View parking area
- **Description:** Follow ridge north of Dante’s View for spectacular vistas and a cool place to escape summer heat. No trail for last 3.5 miles

**Desolation Canyon**

- **Length:** 3 miles, round-trip.
- **Difficulty:** Moderate
- **Start:** Parking area at end of ½ mile dirt road off Badwater Road, 2.7 miles south of Hwy 190.
- **Description:** Narrow canyon through colorful badlands. Follow old road and then main wash east continuing toward cliffs, then follow the wash draining from the south. Hike up canyon, keeping to the right at the forks. No trail.

**Mosaic Canyon**

- **Length:** ½ to 2 miles, one-way.
- **Difficulty:** Moderate
- **Start:** Mosaic Canyon parking area, 2 miles from Stovepipe Wells Village on graded gravel road.
- **Description:** Popular walk up a narrow, polished marble-walled canyon. First ½ mile is narrowest section. Some slickrock scrambling necessary. “Mosaics” of fragments of rocks cemented together can be seen in canyon walls. Bighorn sheep sighted occasionally.

**Salt Creek Interpretive Trail**

- **Length:** ½ mile round-trip.
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Start:** Salt Creek parking area, 1 mile off Hwy 190 on graded gravel road, 13.5 miles north of Furnace Creek.
- **Description:** Boardwalk along small stream. Good for viewing rare pupfish and other wildlife. Best in late winter/early spring.

**Titus Canyon Narrows**

- **Length:** 1.5 miles, one-way.
- **Difficulty:** Easy
- **Start:** Titus Canyon Mouth parking area, 3 miles off Scotty’s Castle Road on graded gravel road.
- **Description:** Easy access to lower Titus Canyon. Walk on gravel road up wash 1.5 miles through narrows or continue to Klare Springs and petroglyphs at 6.5 miles.

**Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes**

- **Length:** 2 miles to highest dune
- **Difficulty:** Easy to moderate
- **Start:** Sand Dunes parking area near Stovepipe Wells.
- **Description:** Graceful desert dunes, numerous animal tracks. Walk cross-country to 100 feet high dunes. Best in morning or afternoon for dramatic light. Also good for full moon hikes. No trail.

**Fall Canyon**

- **Length:** 3 miles, one-way.
- **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous
- **Start:** Titus Canyon Mouth parking area, 3 miles off Scotty’s Castle Road on graded gravel road.
- **Description:** Spectacular wilderness canyon near Titus Canyon. Follow informal path ½ mile north along base of mountains, drop into large wash at canyon mouth, then hike 2½ miles up canyon to 35’ dryfall. You can climb around the dryfall 300’ back down canyon on south side. Canyon continues another 3 miles before second dryfall blocks passage. No trail.

**Darwin Falls**

- **Length:** 1 mile, one-way
- **Difficulty:** Moderate
- **Start:** Darwin Falls parking area, 2.4 miles up gravel road toward Darwin, turn one mile west of Panamint Springs Resort on Hwy 190.
- **Description:** Year-round waterfalls and lush vegetation tucked into a rugged canyon. Can be overgrown and has some rough spots. There is a trail to first waterfall but dangerous cliffs beyond.

**Little Hebe Crater Trail**

- **Length:** ½ mile, one-way.
- **Difficulty:** Moderate
- **Start:** Ubehebe Crater parking area, 8 miles west of Scotty’s Castle.
- **Description:** Volcanic craters and elaborate erosion. Hike along west rim of Ubehebe Crater to Little Hebe and several other craters. Continue around Ubehebe’s rim for 1.5 mile loop hike.

**Fall Canyon**

- **Length:** 3 miles, one-way.
- **Difficulty:** Moderately strenuous
- **Start:** Titus Canyon Mouth parking area, 3 miles off Scotty’s Castle Road on graded gravel road.
- **Description:** Easy access to lower Titus Canyon. Walk on gravel road up wash 1.5 miles through narrows or continue to Klare Springs and petroglyphs at 6.5 miles.

**Telescope Peak Trail**

- **Length:** 7 miles, one-way.
- **Difficulty:** Strenuous
- **Start:** Mahogany Flat Campground at end of upper Wildrose Canyon Road. Rough, steep road after Charcoal Kilns.
- **Description:** Trail to highest peak in the park (11,049 ft.) with a 3,000 ft. elevation gain. Climbing this peak in the winter may require ice axe and crampons, and only advised for experienced winter climbers. Trail is usually snow-free by June.

**Hike Death Valley! Earn the Decal!**

Share the Experience! Participate in the second annual Hike Death Valley challenge! Hike enough to earn at least 4 points. Bring your selfies or group photos to the Visitor Center to share your experience and receive your limited edition decal. Ask at the Visitor Center or go to [www.nps.gov/deva/planyourvisit/hikedeathvalley.htm](http://www.nps.gov/deva/planyourvisit/hikedeathvalley.htm) to learn the details.

**Death Valley Visitor Guide**

5
To pay the park entrance fee at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center, Scotty's Castle Visitor Center, Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station or at one of the automated fee machines placed throughout the park.

Single Visit Pass (valid up to 7 days)
Vehicle & passengers.......................... $20
Individual entering on motorcycle, bicycle, or foot............................... $10

Annual Pass
Death Valley Annual Pass ...................... $40
Interagency Annual Pass ...................... $80
Interagency Military Pass ...................... $free
(for active duty military & dependents)

Lifetime Pass
Interagency Senior Pass ....................... $10
(For U.S. citizens 62+)
Interagency Access Pass ...................... $free
(for U.S. citizens with disability)

Other Passes honored
Golden Age & Golden Access

Commercial Tour Groups
Fee determined by vehicle capacity

Entrance Fees
National Park Service Centennial 1916 - 2016

Death Valley's First Decade With the National Park Service

Seventeen years after the start of the National Park Service (NPS), Death Valley National Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation and was immediately one of the largest sites in the national park system at 1.7 million acres (second to Yellowstone.) After several boundary changes over the years, Death Valley National Monument was created in 1994, and enlarged to become the largest national park outside Alaska at 3.4 million acres. With that came an increase in visitation, from less than 100,000 people the first year to a million visitors annually now.

The monument's first decade began in the depths of the Great Depression and ended with the start of the Second World War. As a national monument, the park budget was not adequate or even guaranteed. Only a skeleton crew of NPS employees managed a vast area. Fortunately, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal program created the Civilian Conservation Corp—the CCC—which not only employed otherwise out-of-work young men, but was the driving force behind the development of the new Death Valley National Monument. Necessary infrastructure, improved roads, and campgrounds were all built with CCC funding and manpower.

The National Park Service has changed and grown over the years. Death Valley has also changed since its recognition as a monument, however it still contends with many of the same issues that challenged the park in the first decade. These issues include mining, invasive species, off-road damage, and visitor safety in an extreme environment. Below read excerpts from the 1930s about these issues and compare it with the 2016 response.

Excerpt from NOVEMBER 1933 - Superintendent John R. White's letter to NPS Director

"Perhaps the most interesting thing in Death Valley was the establishment of a feeding station for wild animals at the Furnace Creek garbage incinerator. I note that in another report from Mr. Gilman he saw 10 magpies, 7 ravens, and 6 burros among other visitors. Fox tracks were numerous and it is expected that in time both foxes and coyotes will become tame enough to make a show for visitors.

2016: As you may have guessed, the National Park Service no longer feeds wild animals for the entertainment of tourists. But at the time, this was a popular activity in many parks, including Sequoia which shared Superintendent John R. White's thoughts. Feeding wild animals in parks is not allowed. Coyotes especially become habituated to hand-outs, turning them into dangerous pests that beg on the roadside and often are hit by cars.

Excerpt from NOVEMBER 1934 - NPS Monthly Report

"The dynamiting of the Salt Pools, an annual Death Valley event, was carried out on the last day of the month to the great interest of a number of holiday visitors."

2016: The Devils Golf Course is where the Salt Pools were located and in the '30s they were the big attraction. Salt Pools are naturally forming sinkholes where underlaying pockets of water have dissolved the thick crust of rock salt, creating crystal-lined pools of extremely briny water. When the easiest access pools crusted over (as they tend to do) the NPS would blast them open again. Needless to say, this is not something we would do today. The Salt Pools eventually stopped forming and the jagged spires of the Devils Golf Course became the main attraction in that area. In the last decade, a few salt pools have been discovered, but now we let nature take its course.

Excerpt from NOVEMBER 1934 - NPS Monthly Report

"The radio station KNLO, Death Valley National Monument, is in continuous service with a schedule to March Field and also a daily schedule with Yosemite National Park. Letters are being received from all over the United States west of the Mississippi River stating that they had picked up this station and asking for pamphlets, maps, and information, on Death Valley National Monument."

2016: Times have indeed changed. Instead of a radio station to share information about the park with the outside world, the internet is our new venue. The park has an official website (www.nps.gov/deva) and we are on Facebook (www.facebook.com/DeathValleyNPS), Twitter (twitter.com/DeathValleyNPS) and Tumblr (deathvalleynp.tumblr.com/)

Excerpt from DECEMBER 1934 - NPS Monthly Report

"During the month of December the most notable event in the Monument was the re-discovery of a very fine natural bridge in a canyon of the Funeral Range, about three miles north of Bad Water. This bridge, while known by the old timers, had been apparently forgotten until Geologist Levi Noble located it last winter. It was again visited by a party from the Borax Company and the Automobile Club of Southern California, which advertised it to such an extent that it became necessary in the interest of safety to grade a primitive road to the site. It was very heavily visited during the month."

2016: It may seem strange that the Natural Bridge, one of the park’s major attractions, was (re)discovered after the National Monument was established, but other natural bridges and arches are still being discovered even now. Tucked deep in slot canyons or high on canyon walls, adventurous hikers have found several of these natural rock spans over the last few years, but this one is the largest known in the park.

Excerpt from JULY 1939 - NPS Monthly Report

"Almost two weeks were spent in a survey of the desert bighorn sheep (Ovis Nellsonii). Accomplishment did not reach expectation but it was satisfying to note that the bighorn are more numerous than our estimates heretofore.

“During the above survey, burros were noted with increasing frequency in most regions of the monument visited, and in one locality cattle and horses were found. It has been the experience of all wildlife observers that the bighorn and the burro and cattle are incompatible. With the notable success that has attended the protection of the bighorn to date, it is all the more reason that every effort be made to give them the freedom of the range to the exclusion or at least the control of the burro."

2016: Burros are not native to the American deserts—miners brought them to the area as work animals. Unfortunately, they breed quickly and damage food and water sources that bighorn sheep need to survive. In the early years, the method of control was to shoot the burros. These days, round-ups and an adoption program is a less cost-effective but more compassionate method.

Excerpt from SEPTEMBER 1938- NPS Monthly Report

“A ranger investigated the accident occurring in the Wildrose CCC camp wherein an enrollee lost part of three fingers and a thumb by an explosion. Particles found in roof and walls indicated a detonator had been exploded. The boy later admitted having found two in an abandoned mine. Two companions were treated by the camp doctor for minor injuries resulting from the explosion."

2016: Although mining has not occurred in the National Park for nearly a decade, dangerous materials are still occasionally found by hikers in remote sections of the park. Several discoveries of old blasting caps and even unstable dynamite have had to be destroyed by explosives experts. Caution should always be used around old mining sights and explosions found should be avoided and reported to a ranger.
How Borax Helped Make a National Park

The borax mining boom of the 1880s had a direct influence on the future of not only Death Valley, but on the National Park Service as well.

In Death Valley, borax mining companies processed ore at the Harmony Borax Works and transported the refined product with large wagons hauled by long teams of 20 mules. Those Twenty Mule Teams became an emblem of borax and Death Valley when Stephen Mather, a sales manager for the Pacific Coast Borax Company began their use as a company logo.

After Mather left the company he traveled the country visiting many national parks and meeting John Muir in Sequoia. Mather loved the national parks, but was disappointed in how bad management had led to their poor conditions. Mather wrote to the Secretary of the Interior with his concerns, who solved the issue by making Mather the first director of the National Park Service in 1916.

In 1926, Mather was invited by his old company to see the beauty of Death Valley first hand and to convince him it should be a national park. The Pacific Coast Borax Company had begun to shift their operations from mining to tourism and planned to build the Furnace Creek Inn here. Upon his visit, Mather realized Death Valley was worthy, but was worried that his past connections with the company would make his involvement in seeking national park status controversial. Mather suggested the company should find ways to promote Death Valley to garner public support for its protection. In response, they began to circulate glowing articles and created the highly successful radio program (and later television program) “Death Valley Days”. This helped the drama and beauty of Death Valley take hold in the public mindset.

When Mather died in 1930, his assistant Horace Albright became the next National Park Service Director. Albright was also familiar with Death Valley having grown up in nearby Owens Valley. Without the same troublesome ties to the borax company, Albright was able to propose the establishment of Death Valley National Monument in 1933. Death Valley was on the pathway to eventually becoming a National Park on October 31, 1994.

Father Crowley was troubled by the “Water Wars” of California and advocated on the behalf of residents in Owens Valley. As a way to help, Father Crowley turned to the new idea of tourism. He wrote in 1938, “When six and a half million people decide to go fishing or camping or skiing they will require a lot of territory. In those days the thousands of lakes and the myriad of streams in the High Sierra will come into their own as the greatest playground in the world, in area and variety, with the limitless desert thrown in for good measure.” Father Crowley believed tourism and expanding the boundaries of Death Valley Monument would be beneficial not only to his present residents but also for future generations.

One of his favorite spots in Death Valley was Darwin Falls. He referred to it as “that wonder of the Mojave”. It was this spot that made him contemplate, “I wonder whether the traveling public will appreciate the foresight of the men who have planned to preserve the flora and fauna.”

Just past Panamint Springs and Darwin Falls, there is the Father Crowley Vista Point. To this writer it is one of the most beautiful views in the park. We invite you to go the vista point, take in the striking scenery and perhaps contemplate the dedication of those who helped make this park available for your use today. For nothing “just” happens. It takes dedication and maximum effort to create anything worthwhile.

Paleontology Tours

Millions of years ago, Death Valley’s landscape and lifeforms appeared very different from the harsh desert of today.

On the Paleontology Tour, a park ranger will lead you into the wilderness through a dramatic canyon with high cliff walls opening into a multi-colored basin. There you will have a close up encounter with well-preserved fossilized tracks of bird, horse, camel, and mastodon-like creatures. Although this fragile paleontological resource area is usually closed to the public, there will be two ranger-led tours on selected dates. Each hike is limited to 15 people.

The free hike is an all day, seven-mile round trip with a 1,500 foot elevation gain. Due to the loose footing and rugged nature of the terrain, this hike is considered moderately strenuous and not recommended for anyone with mobility or breathing difficulties. The hike is appropriate for older children, age 10 and up.

2015 - 2016 Paleontology Tours:

• Sunday, January 17, 2016 (lottery sign-up on December 17-19, 2015)
• Sunday, February 14, 2016 (lottery sign-up on January 14-16, 2016)

Enter the tour lottery on sign-up dates ONLY, email deva_information@nps.gov (use Paleo Hike Lottery in tagline) or phone 760-786-3280. Clearly state your name, the number of people in your party (limit of 4 including yourself), your phone number and email address.

National Park Service Centennial 1916 - 2016

The Desert Padre

At Death Valley, we say “The desert is calling and I must go,” a refined rewording of the old John Muir quote. As the National Park Service celebrates its Centennial, it is essential to reflect on those who have heard this special calling. It was due to their focused foresight that we, the modern visitor, volunteer, and ranger have this significant place.

One such individual, who heard the desert call, was Father John Crowley, a Monsignor at a Catholic parish in Lone Pine in the 1930s. Father Crowley would celebrate Mass in Death Valley, especially for those in the Civilian Conservation Corps. In addition to his priestly duties, Father Crowley became an early advocate for Owens Valley and the Death Valley region. He would write under the name “Inyokel” for newspapers of the region as a way to share the story of Death Valley. He would mention characters such as Death Valley Scotty, and keep readers abreast of the comings and goings of visitors to the valley. Father Crowley hoped he was preserving history in print and indeed he did!

When it was time to celebrate the opening of California Highway 190, a road that would connect Mt. Whitney to Death Valley, it was Father Crowley who orchestrated a ceremony in which water from Lake Tulainyo high in the Sierra Nevada was carried in a gourd over 150 miles and poured into Badwater. The meaning of this pageant was to celebrate the past and welcome a prosperous future.

One of his favorite spots in Death Valley was Darwin Falls. He referred to it as “that wonder of the Mojave”. It was this spot that made him contemplate, “I wonder whether the traveling public will appreciate the foresight of the men who have planned to preserve the flora and fauna.”

Just past Panamint Springs and Darwin Falls, there is the Father Crowley Vista Point. To this writer it is one of the most beautiful views in the park. We invite you to go the vista point, take in the striking scenery and perhaps contemplate the dedication of those who helped make this park available for your use today. For nothing “just” happens. It takes dedication and maximum effort to create anything worthwhile.
**Desert Rain**

**Rain in Death Valley**

Death Valley is the driest place in North America, averaging less than two inches of rain per year. Yet when it does rain, it can rain hard and fast, carving out canyons, destroying roads and threatening those who visit and live here. Over the years there has been a lot of fluctuation in rainfall. For example, no precipitation was recorded in 1953, but the wettest year on record was between July 2004 and June 2005 when the park received 6.44 inches.

While the rest of California is experiencing its worst drought ever recorded, Death Valley is experiencing higher than normal rainfall. In October we received 1.3 inches of rain, well above the average of 0.1 inches for the month.

Many storms are localized. It may be raining in one part of the park but not at Furnace Creek where the park’s official weather station is located. The Scotty’s Castle area received 2.7 inches of rain in 5 hours on October 18, causing extensive flooding and damage.

Flash floods can cut through the pavement surface or deposit rock and dirt several feet thick on top of the road. In wet years, National Park Service road crews are kept busy patching pavement, filling in ditches, and moving debris off the roads before they can be reopened to the public.

Joshua Tree NP, Lake Mead NRA, Mojave National Preserve, Santa Monica Mountains NRA, Sequoia and Kings Canyon NP and Yosemite are just a few National Parks lending us a hand to repair the roads and protect Death Valley. It has been a team effort. While some roads are going to open up soon others will take longer.

**Scotty’s Castle Affected by Flood**

A flash flood on October 18, 2015 impacted the Death Valley Scotty Historic District in Grapevine Canyon.

Scotty’s Castle was built in the 1920s as a vacation home by Albert Johnson, a Chicago millionaire. Johnson became interested in Death Valley because of his investment in Walter “Death Valley Scotty” Scott’s fraudulent gold mine. The story of these two men’s friendship is intriguing.

The main house at Scotty’s Castle was not affected by the flood, but two other historic structures—the Hacienda and Garage/Longhouse—were partially filled with mud. Sections of the road were washed away. The water treatment system and pipeline was destroyed.

As of October 20, 2015, all of Grapevine Canyon is legally closed to public access (even on foot).

It is not yet determined when Scotty’s Castle will be open again for public tours. Please check www.nps.gov/deva or inquire at the visitor center.

**Spring Wildflowers**

The silver lining to the dark cloud of the October storm events is what it means for the spring 2016 wildflower season. That boom of thunder may signal a desert transformed into a bloom of magnificent proportions.

Many desert wildflowers have a protective coating on their seeds that prevents them from germinating unless there is a very good chance that there will be enough moisture to bring them to maturity. These seeds may remain dormant for many years, even decades. But if a storm that brings an inch or more of rain falls in Autumn, it can wear away this protective coating and allow the seeds to sprout and begin to grow. If this storm is followed by the gentle winter rains of an El Nino weather pattern, the conditions are right for a superb wildflower bloom. These conditions are predicted for this winter, setting the stage for a possible Death Valley “superbloom.”

**10 Most Common Death Valley Wildflowers**

- **Desert Gold**
  Geraea canescens
  Most abundant yellow flower on the valley floor.

- **Brown-eyed Evening Primrose**
  Camissonia claviformis
  White flowers open in the evening, fade to pink next day.

- **Notch-leaf Phacelia**
  Phacelia crenulata
  Do not touch phacelias, they cause a skin rash.

- **Lesser Mojavea**
  Mojavea breviflora
  Lemon-yellow flowers peek out from among leaves.

- **Desert Five-spot**
  Eremalche rotundifolia
  Globe-shaped flowers and round leaves.

- **Golden Evening Primrose**
  Camissonia brevipes
  Most abundant yellow flower in mid-elevations

- **Pebble Pincushion**
  Chaenactis carphoclina
  White disk flowers on wiry plant.

- **Bigelow Monkeyflower**
  Mimulus bigelovii
  Grows like a Mojavea, but bright magenta flowers.

- **Beavertail Cactus**
  Opuntia basilaris
  This prickly pear is the most common cactus in the park.

- **Gravel Ghost**
  Atrichoseris platyphylla
  White flowers more noticeable than large, low leaves.
Very little has changed about the Death Valley sky since Bessie Johnson wrote these words. The night skies in Death Valley are very dark and minimally impacted by city lights.

The modern world is losing its dark skies. Due to growing cities, a vast majority of Americans cannot see the Milky Way from their homes, and many children born today will never see a truly dark sky. Death Valley is an oasis of dark nights in a bright world. Ninety-one percent of Death Valley National Park is designated wilderness. Permanent developments are prohibited within wilderness, and the few park developments outside wilderness are small and isolated.

“Thanks to reduced lighting inside the park, and limited city lights outside the park, our eyes can see many wonders in the dark night skies. On moonless nights, bright planets like Jupiter and Venus dominate the view. You can also see the Milky Way, star clusters like the Pleiades, and even the distant Andromeda Galaxy—2.5 million light years away—all with the naked eye. Conversely, when the moon is full, it outshines all but the brightest stars. Exploring Death Valley by the light of the full moon is like seeing a completely different place as the moon casts dramatic shadows on a once-familiar landscape.”

Death Valley National Park harbors some of the darkest night skies in the United States. That dark sky led the International Dark-Sky Association to designate the park as the third and largest International Dark Sky Park.

“The Dark Sky Park designation represents not only the efforts of the park and its partners, but the dedication of avid amateur astronomers who have sought the park’s world-class starry skies for decades,” said Dan Duriscoe, of the National Park Service’s Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division.

To qualify for the dark sky designation, the park improved external lighting at facilities in the Furnace Creek and Stovepipe Wells areas, reducing energy consumption, sky glow, and glare. The designation requires the park to sustain its efforts to protect night sky resources and visitor education. Implementation of the park’s lighting guidelines will improve the natural character of the night and leave the stars unattenuated in other areas of the park.

Park rangers offer night sky programs and hold star gazing events. Using high-powered telescopes or naked-eye viewing visitors can explore the mysteries of Death Valley’s dark night skies.

“At Death Valley the sky literally begins at your feet,” said Tyler Nordgren, Associate Professor of Physics at the University of Redlands ( Calif.) and International Dark-Sky Association board member. “When my students and I look up at night from our southern California campus, we can usually count 12 stars in the sky. However, less than a five hour drive from Los Angeles there’s a place where anyone can look up and see the universe the way everyone could 100 years ago.”

For more information about the National Park Service’s Night Skies Program, visit www.nature.nps.gov/night/. The International Dark-Sky Association is online at www.dark-sky.org.

**Death Valley: International Dark Sky Park**

**Night Sky Almanac**

**OCTOBER 2015**
- Planets Visible
  - Mercury: Mid-Oct, east before dawn
  - Venus: East before dawn
  - Mars: East before dawn
  - Jupiter: East before dawn
  - Saturn: Low in SW after sunset
- The Moon
  - New Moon: Oct 12
  - Full Moon: Oct 27
- Draconids Meteor Shower:
  - Early evening Oct 8
- Orionid Meteor Shower:
  - October 22, midnight to dawn

**NOVEMBER 2015**
- Planets visible
  - Venus: SE before dawn
  - Mars: SE before dawn
  - Jupiter: SE before dawn
  - Saturn: Low in the west after sunset
- The Moon
  - New Moon: November 11
  - Full Moon: November 25
- Leonid Meteor Shower
  - Peak: Nov 18, midnight to dawn

**DECEMBER 2015**
- Planets visible
  - Mercury: Late Dec, west after sunset
  - Venus: SE before dawn
  - Mars: SE before dawn
  - Jupiter: SE before dawn
  - Saturn: Late Dec, low in E before dawn
- The Moon
  - New Moon: December 11
  - Full Moon: December 25
- Winter Solstice
  - December 22
- Geminid Meteor Shower
  - Peak: Dec 14, midnight to dawn

**JANUARY 2016**
- Planets Visible
  - Venus & Saturn: SE before dawn
  - Mars: East after 2:00 am
  - Jupiter: East after 11:00 pm
- The Moon
  - New Moon: January 9
  - Full Moon: January 23
- Quadrantids Meteor Shower
  - Peak: Jan 4, midnight to dawn

**FEBRUARY 2016**
- Planets Visible
  - Venus: East, before dawn
  - Mars: SE after 2:00 am
  - Jupiter: East after 7:30 pm
  - Saturn: SE after 3:00 am
- The Moon
  - New Moon: February 8
  - Full Moon: February 22

**MARCH 2016**
- Planets Visible
  - Venus: Low in east before dawn
  - Mars: SE after midnight
  - Jupiter: East after sunset
  - Saturn: SE after 2:00 am
- The Moon
  - New Moon: March 8
  - Full Moon: March 23, Penumbral Lunar Eclipse at 4:47 am
- Spring Equinox
  - March 20

**APRIL 2016**
- Planets Visible
  - Mercury: Apr 9-18, west after sunset
  - Mars & Saturn: SE after midnight
  - Jupiter: SE after sunset
- The Moon
  - New Moon: April 7
  - Full Moon: April 21
- Lyrids Meteor Shower:
  - Peak: April 22, midnight to dawn

**MAY 2016**
- Planets Visible
  - Mars and Saturn: SE after 9:30 pm
  - Jupiter: South after sunset
- The Moon
  - New Moon: May 6
  - Full Moon: May 21
- Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower
  - Peak: May 7, midnight to dawn

**SEE THE MILKY WAY IN DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK**

**HALF THE PARK IS AFTER DARK**

“**You have never really seen the stars till you have seen them in Death Valley. The clear, limpid atmosphere brings them very close. You feel you could reach up and pull them down.**” — Bessie Johnson
## Visitor Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Furnace Creek Visitor Center</strong>&lt;br&gt;National Park Service&lt;br&gt;Death Valley Natural History Association</td>
<td>760-786-3200&lt;br&gt;www.nps.gov/deva</td>
<td>Park information, exhibits, park film, bookstore, ranger talks, drinking water and restrooms. Pay park entrance fees and purchase passes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scotty’s Castle Visitor Center</strong>&lt;br&gt;National Park Service&lt;br&gt;Death Valley Natural History Association</td>
<td>760-786-2392&lt;br&gt;reservations: 877-444-6777 or recreation.gov</td>
<td>CLOSED DUE TO FLOOD DAMAGE. Tours daily (fee charged), park information, bookstore and restrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stovepipe Wells Village</strong>&lt;br&gt;Death Valley Lodging Company&lt;br&gt;(park concession)</td>
<td>760-786-2387&lt;br&gt;escapetodeathvalley.com</td>
<td>Lodging, restaurant, bar, gift shop, convenience store, ATM, gas station, showers, swimming pool, paved airstrip, RV hookups, NPS campground, and ranger station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panamint Springs Resort</strong>&lt;br&gt;(privately owned)</td>
<td>775-482-7680&lt;br&gt;panamintsprings.com</td>
<td>Lodging, restaurant, bar, gas station, campground, RV hookups, and showers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Furnace Creek Inn &amp; Ranch Resorts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Xanterra Parks &amp; Resorts&lt;br&gt;(privately owned)</td>
<td>760-786-2345&lt;br&gt;furnacecreekresort.com</td>
<td>Lodging, RV hookups &amp; campground, restaurants, saloon, golf course, General Store (groceries and gifts), ATM, swimming pool, showers, laundromat, gas station (gasoline, diesel, propane, tire &amp; minor auto repair), bike rentals, tennis courts, sports court, playground, paved airstrip, Borax Museum, and Post Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Furnace Creek Stables</strong>&lt;br&gt;(privately owned)</td>
<td>760-614-1018&lt;br&gt;furnacecreekstables.net</td>
<td>One and two-hour guided horseback rides and specialty sunset and moonlight rides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farabee’s Jeep Rentals</strong>&lt;br&gt;Located across the street from the Furnace Creek Inn.&lt;br&gt;(privately owned)</td>
<td>760-786-9872&lt;br&gt;877-970-5337&lt;br&gt;DeathValleyJeepRentals.com</td>
<td>Four-wheel-drive Jeep rentals and guided tours.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CAMPGROUNDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Elevation</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Tables</th>
<th>Fire pits</th>
<th>Toilets</th>
<th>RV Hookups</th>
<th>Dump Station</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Furnace Creek (NPS)</td>
<td>all year</td>
<td>-196’</td>
<td>$18*</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>flush</td>
<td>18*</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Furnace Creek Ranch</td>
<td>all year</td>
<td>-218’</td>
<td>$37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>flush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunset (NPS)</td>
<td>Oct 15-Apr 30</td>
<td>-196’</td>
<td>$12</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>flush</td>
<td>no</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas Spring (NPS)</td>
<td>Oct 15-Apr 30</td>
<td>sea level</td>
<td>$14</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>flush</td>
<td>no</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stovepipe Wells (NPS)</td>
<td>Sept 15-May</td>
<td>sea level</td>
<td>$12</td>
<td>190</td>
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<td>some</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>flush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stovepipe Wells RV Park</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>some</td>
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<td>Panamint Springs Resort</td>
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<td>2000’</td>
<td>$7.50-$30</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>some</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>no</td>
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<td>Mesquite Spring (NPS)</td>
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<td>1800’</td>
<td>$12</td>
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<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>flush</td>
<td>no</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emigrant (NPS)</td>
<td>tent only</td>
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<td>2100’</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>flush</td>
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<td>Wildrose (NPS)</td>
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<td>4100’</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>vault</td>
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<td>Mar-Nov</td>
<td>7400’</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>yes</td>
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<td>vault</td>
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<td>Mahogany Flat** (NPS)</td>
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<td>yes</td>
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*Additional $12 Utility Fee for electric, water, and sewer hook-ups. Utility Fees are not subject to Lifetime Pass discounts.<br>**Accessible to high-clearance vehicles only. 4-wheel drive may be necessary.<br>**Generator hours are from 7 am to 7 pm, unless otherwise posted. Generators are not allowed at Texas Springs Campground.<br>**Sunset Campground: To assist us in the event of an emergency, please back in your RV unit or use a pull-through site.<br>**Texas Springs Campground (Upper Loop) Limits on RV site use may apply in springtime to accommodate increased demand for tent camping space. No generators allowed.