
THE PARKS

The National Park Service (NPS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manage large sections of land within the Mojave Desert. Both agencies are under the Department of the Interior, but each has a different management policy.



THE PARKS

National Park Service (NPS)

The National Park Service follows guidelines set by the Organic Act, which was passed by Congress on August 25, 1916. The act states: "The Service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations... which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." In other words, the NPS focuses its management to conserve the various units under its jurisdiction while still allowing use and enjoyment of them.



Bureau Of Land Management (BLM)

The mission of the Bureau of Land Management is based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. It is committed to manage, protect, and improve these lands in a manner to serve the needs of the American people for all times. The resources that the BLM manages in the Mojave Desert include recreation; rangelands; minerals; watershed; fish and wildlife; wilderness; air; and scenic, scientific, and cultural values. The BLM has jurisdiction over the largest portion of federally-owned land in the Mojave Desert. Therefore, a majority of the



desert is managed under this philosophy.

It may seem redundant to have more than one land management agency, but it really is not. Each agency must focus its management style on the resources it has been given by the American people to manage. In this way, it is possible to provide the best management possible for the vast resources of the Mojave Desert.

NPS Units

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

INFORMATION

Write: Superintendent, Death Valley National Park, Death Valley, CA 92328
Email: DEVA_information@nps.gov
Call: 760-786-3200
www.nps.gov/deva on the Internet

IN AN EMERGENCY

Call: 911 or 760-786-2330

HOW TO GET THERE

Death Valley is located on the California/Nevada border, 140 miles west of Las Vegas, Nevada, and 240 miles northeast of Los Angeles. Access through the park is most easily gained along California 190 from the east or west. The largest community within Death Valley is Furnace Creek, which is also the location of the visitor center. Scotty's Castle is located in the northern portion of the park. Access to the castle is gained heading north off California 190 or entering from the north on Nevada 267.

PARK OVERVIEW

Death Valley National Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation in 1933. In 1994, Death Valley National Monument was redesignated Death Valley National Park with the passage of the California Desert Protection Act. Death Valley NP now encompasses

over 3.3 million acres, making it the largest National Park Service area in the contiguous 48 states. Although Death Valley is a long distance from most metropolitan areas, school groups are encouraged to visit. The unique scientific features located in and near Death Valley make it a fantastic place to learn about the desert. There are many locations within the park that can provide for a wonderful outdoor education experience.

Death Valley contains the lowest point on the North American continent — a portion of the Badwater Salt Pan lies 282 feet below sea level. The highest point in the park is Telescope Peak, in the Panamint Mountains, at 11,049 feet above sea level. The geological record is remarkably complete, if confusing. Although there is still much disagreement among geologists regarding the mechanism for the valley's formation, all of the major divisions of geologic time are represented.

Plant and animal life is abundant. Over nine hundred species of plants (twenty-one of which are found nowhere else in the world) and numerous species of mammals, reptiles, and birds are found from the lowest elevations to the highest. Desert pupfish, relics from the Pleistocene Epoch, survive in small, isolated pools of water. Desert bighorn sheep inhabit the rocky slopes and gorges of the high country. Predators include coyotes, kit foxes, bobcats, and an occasional mountain lion.

The record of human occupation dates back nine thousand years. Although approximately two thousand archeological sites in Death Valley have been recorded, the inventory is not complete. Less than five percent of the park has been sampled. Only by seeking a shortcut to the California gold fields did a small group of pioneers stumble upon the valley and give it its name.

Myths, legends, and rumors of possible mineral riches spread through the west, and expeditions into Death Valley ensued. Despite the flurry of gold and silver mining, Death Valley's real riches proved to be borate and talc deposits and the tourism generated by the valley's growing mystique.

SAFETY

Always carry plenty of water, whether planning to hike or just driving through. The park contains hundreds of abandoned mines and associated structures that are potentially dangerous. Stay out and stay alive! Be alert for flash floods when it looks stormy. Do not ford low places when water is running. Watch where you put your hands and feet, especially in warm weather when snakes are most active. Drink and carry plenty of water. Summer temperatures regularly exceed 110°F. Even in spring, when it is cooler, it is important to guard against dehydration.

VISITOR ACTIVITIES

Hiking, camping, backpacking, and photography are all popular activities. Ranger-conducted programs are available daily during the winter and spring. Check at the visitor center and entrance stations for the current schedule.

VISITOR SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Groups are responsible for making their own camping or lodging reservations. Camping can be reserved in advance, October through April, by contacting Spherics at 800-365-CAMP. For motel reservations you can contact the Furnace Creek Ranch, P.O. Box 1, Death Valley, CA 92328, or call 760-786-2345. Rooms are also available at Stovepipe Wells, twenty-seven miles north of Furnace Creek on California 190. For reservations call 760-786-2387.

FEES

General entrance is \$10 per car for seven days. Bus visitors pay \$5 per person for non-commercial trips. Camping fees range from \$8 to \$40 per site. Educational groups from accredited institutions may qualify for fee waivers for entrance and camping fees. Contact the fee collections supervisor at the park address.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The park is open twenty-four hours a day. The visitor center is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Scotty's Castle is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A FIELD TRIP

Education programs are available for groups who want to learn firsthand about the area through National Park Service interpreters who are very familiar with the park. These programs are available on a reservation basis. To book a program contact the assistant chief district interpreter at the park address or call 760-786-3200. Scotty's Castle is a wonderful place to introduce children to a fun way to learn history. Tours through the castle are offered in the form of living history. Your guide is dressed as if from the 1930s time period and will contact your group as if they are visitors from that era. The tours need to be booked in advance by contacting the Scotty's Castle district interpreter at the park address or call 760-786-2392.

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

INFORMATION

Write: Superintendent, Joshua Tree National Park, 74485 National Park Drive, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277-3597.
Email: JOTR_info @ nps.gov
Call: 760-367-5500.
www.nps.gov/jotr on the Internet.

IN AN EMERGENCY

Call: 911 or (909) 383-5651 collect.

HOW TO GET THERE

The park lies 140 miles east of Los Angeles. You can approach it from the west via Interstate 10 and California 62 to entrances in the towns of Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms. The south entrance at Cottonwood Spring, which lies twenty-five miles east of Indio, can be approached from the east or west, also via Interstate 10.

PARK OVERVIEW

The park was established by Presidential Proclamation in 1936. Two deserts, the Mojave and the Colorado (a subsection of the Sonoran), come together at Joshua Tree National Park. These are two large ecosystems primarily determined by elevation. Few areas more vividly illustrate the contrast between the two deserts.

The higher and slightly cooler Mojave Desert is the home of the Joshua tree, extensive stands of which dominate the park's western half. The trees can reach nearly thirty-five feet in height, and age estimates of old trees approach eight hundred years. The Colorado Desert occupies the eastern half of the park. Creosote bush, ocotillo, and cholla cactus are characteristic plants of these elevations below three thousand feet.

The park's variety of protected habitats supports wildlife of many kinds. Animals which can be found here include reptiles and amphibians (desert tortoises, snakes, lizards), more than two hundred species of birds, invertebrates, and more than forty species of mammals (bats, mice, ground squirrels, jackrabbits, coyotes, raccoons, foxes, bobcats, mule deer, bighorn sheep).

The park encompasses some of the most outstanding geologic displays to be found in the California desert — the results of repeated uplifts, lava flows, and continuous erosion. The western part of the park embraces several mountain masses with peaks rising over five thousand feet, interlaced with

THE PARKS

medium-elevation plateaus and valleys. To the east, plateaus drop off into the immense, elliptical-shaped Pinto Basin. The colossal outcrops of the Wonderland of Rocks area offer some of the most spectacular scenery in the park. Throughout the region are many clues to a geography shaped — past, present, and future — by earthquakes.

Complementing the fascinating natural history is a rich cultural history of Native Americans, miners, cattlemen, and homesteaders. The first humans inhabited the area perhaps ten thousand years ago and enjoyed a more favorable climate. Throughout the park are reminders of these earlier inhabitants — Native American rock art, mine shafts and associated buildings, homesteader cabins, and handmade dams.

SAFETY

Always carry plenty of water, whether planning to hike or just driving through. Avoid drainage areas after thunderstorms or severe weather because of flash floods. Do not enter mine shafts or associated buildings. They are extremely dangerous. Set strict guidelines with your group for rock scrambling and climbing; even short falls can be fatal. Watch where you put your hands and feet, especially in warm weather when snakes are most active.

VISITOR ACTIVITIES

Hiking, climbing, camping, backpacking, and photography are all popular activities. Ranger-conducted programs are available on weekends in the spring and fall. Check at visitor centers, at entrance stations, or on park bulletin boards for the current schedule.

VISITOR SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

No services are available in the park. Motels, stores, restaurants, and auto services are located in nearby towns. Camping reservations are available for group sites and two family campgrounds.

Contact Spherics at 800-365-CAMP. Fees are charged for camping.

FEES

General entrance is \$10 per car for seven days. Bus visitors pay \$5 per person for non-commercial trips. Camping fees range from \$5 to \$35 per site. Educational groups from accredited institutions may qualify for fee waivers for entrance fees. Write: Education Office, 9800 Black Rock Canyon Road, Yucca Valley, CA 92284, Email: JOTR_Education@nps.gov, or call: 760-367-3011.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The park is open twenty-four hours a day. The Oasis Visitor Center in Twentynine Palms is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. The Cottonwood Visitor Center is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Black Rock Nature Center is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., September through May.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A FIELD TRIP

Write: Education Office, Joshua Tree National Park, 9800 Black Rock Canyon Road, Yucca Valley, CA 92284, or call: 760-367-3011. Ranger-led programs are available on both natural and cultural history topics.

Many groups visit the park on their own. Fee waivers may be available (see Fees section). The park has many self-guided nature trails with either interpretive signing or brochures. Other short or longer trails may be appropriate for your group. Picnic areas are available. Water is only available at a few locations; plan to bring your own. Be sure your group is prepared with appropriate clothing and sturdy walking shoes.

LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

INFORMATION

Write: Superintendent, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, 601 Nevada Highway, Boulder City, NV 89005. Email: LAME_information@nps.gov

Call: 702-293-8990

www.nps.gov/lame on the Internet

IN AN EMERGENCY

Call: 911, 702-293-8932, or 800-680-5851.

HOW TO GET THERE

The Lake Mead Alan Bible Visitor Center is located near the west end of Lake Mead, on U.S. Route 93, four miles east of Boulder City, thirty miles south of Las Vegas. Katherine's Landing is on the south end of Lake Mohave, on the Arizona side, three miles above Davis Dam. It is thirty-three miles from Kingman, Arizona, and seven miles from Bullhead City, Arizona.

PARK OVERVIEW

The park was established by Congress in 1964 as the nation's first national recreation area. Lake Mead, formed by Hoover Dam, and Lake Mohave, formed by Davis Dam, dominate the park. The park contains a wide diversity of resources and constitutes extensive and superlative examples of the plants, animals, and physical geography. From an elevation of approximately 517 feet at Davis Dam, the land rises to a height of 7,072 feet on the Shivwits Plateau.

While the park's name conjures up an image of water, the land-based resources comprise eighty-seven percent of the park's surface area and offer an exciting wealth of natural and cultural resources enhancing the attraction of the Colorado River and Lakes Mead and Mohave.

Exposed within the park boundaries are geological deposits spanning 1.7 billion years. They represent the Basin and Range and the Colorado Plateau provinces, the boundary between which may be seen at the Grand Wash Cliffs. Not so readily discernible are paleontological resources. Petrified wood and fossilized shells are found at various locations, and mammoth remains over ten thousand years old have been found at Overton Arm.

Complementing this geological

THE PARKS

diversity is the fact that Lake Mead NRA lies within the northeastern portion of the Mojave Desert, on the southern edge of the Great Basin Desert, and just north of the Sonoran Desert. As a result of this location and the interface of these deserts, the park contains a surprising variety of plants and animals, such as the gila monster, ocotillo, palo verde, and smoke tree. These species are considered to be at the far reaches of their northern distributional range.

While at first glance, the region may seem to be a hostile land, humans have known the secrets of this area for longer than might be imagined. So far, the oldest evidence of early habitation has been dated at 3,000 B.C. There are over nine hundred identified archeological sites above the water lines of Lakes Mead and Mojave.

SAFETY

For protection against sunshine, wear a hat and sunglasses. Summer temperatures can reach 120°F. Never swim alone. Air mattresses and other beach toys can quickly blow away, leaving you stranded far from shore. Always check the weather forecast. Spring and summer days can be very windy; summer storms can arise abruptly. Call 702-736-3854 for a current forecast from the National Weather Service. Be alert for flash floods in stormy weather.

VISITOR ACTIVITIES

Visitors enjoy swimming, fishing, boating, and backcountry hiking in spring and fall and camping year round. Ranger-guided programs are available for the general public. Check with the visitor center for the current schedule.

VISITOR SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Food and drinks are available at all marinas. Motels, stores, restaurants, and auto services are found in nearby towns.

Campgrounds are located at various areas of the park.

FEES

General entrance is \$5 per car for five days. Campsites are \$10 per night and no reservations are available. Contact the park for information on fee waivers for educational groups.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The park is open twenty-four hours a day. The visitor center is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A FIELD TRIP

Because of the high demand for these programs and limited park staff, ranger-led field trips in the Mead area are only conducted for teachers who have attended the National Park Service workshop: *My Home is the Mojave*. Some field trips are scheduled through a lottery system. Programs in the Kathreine's Landing (Mohave) area are scheduled on a limited basis. For more information on the programs, call the education office at 702-293-8716 or 8957, or visit our website at www.nps.gov/lame/classindex.htm.

You are welcome to take your group on your own anywhere in the park. Several trails exist near each visitor facility. Shaded picnic areas are also located near each campground. Shade is sparse, so it is best to visit in the fall or early spring. Bring water and wear sturdy walking shoes. Thin shoes or sandals will not provide protection against cactus.

MOJAVE NATIONAL PRESERVE

INFORMATION

Write: Superintendent, Mojave National Preserve, 222 East Main Street, Suite 202, Barstow, CA 92311

Email: moja_info@nps.gov

Call: 760-255-8836

www.nps.gov/moja on the Internet

IN AN EMERGENCY

Call: 911 or 909-383-5651.

HOW TO GET THERE

Mojave National Preserve is located 180 miles northeast of Los Angeles and 50 miles southwest of Las Vegas. Access is from I-15 at Baker, Cima Road, and Nipton Road and from I-40 at Kelbaker Road, Essex Road, and Fenner. There are no gas stations, stores, or other services inside the park, so come prepared.

PARK OVERVIEW

Mojave National Preserve was established through the California Desert Protection Act of 1994. Rose-colored sand dunes, volcanic cinder cones, Joshua tree forests, and mile-high mountains are all part of the scene. The preserve encompasses 1.6 million acres of mountains, jumble rocks, desert washes, and dry lakes; outdoor enthusiasts appreciate the opportunity for solitude here not easily found at other southern California parks.

Plant and animal life varies by elevation. Desert tortoises burrow in creosote bush flats, while the black and yellow Scott's oriole nests in Joshua trees higher up the slopes. Mule deer and big-horn sheep roam among pinyon pine and juniper in the preserve's many mountain ranges.

Mojave Desert experiences change with the seasons. Infrequent winter snows sparkle on the mountains. With enough moisture, spring wildflowers carpet the desert with vivid colors. Summers are hot: hikers and campers explore the higher elevations such as Mid-Hills and the New York Mountains. The cooler temperatures of fall mark hunting season. A network of dirt roads offer year-round opportunities to explore by 4-wheel-drive vehicle.

SAFETY

Always carry plenty of water in your car and especially when hiking. A hat and sun screen are essential for hiking. Be

THE PARKS

careful around abandoned mines; do not enter mine shafts for any reason. To avoid rattlesnakes, watch where you put your hands and feet.

VISITOR ACTIVITIES

Hiking, climbing, camping, backpacking, and exploring dirt roads are all popular activities.

VISITOR SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

No services are available in the park. Gas stations with convenience stores are located at Baker, Halloran Summit, Cima Road, and Primm on I-15 and at Ludlow and Fenner along I-40. Motels and restaurants are located at Baker, Nipton, and Ludlow. Reservations are not accepted at family campgrounds, but campgrounds rarely fill. Groups can reserve the Black Canyon Group and Equestrian Campground by calling 760-928-2572.

FEES

There are no entrance fees. Camping is \$12 per night, per site. Group camping is \$25 per night.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The park is open all the time. The Baker information center is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily except Christmas. The Hole-in-the-Wall information center is open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A FIELD TRIP

Call park rangers at 760-255-8836 to inquire about educational programs.

BLM Unit

RED ROCK CANYON NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

INFORMATION

Write: Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, HRC 33, Box 5500, Las Vegas, NV 89124
Call: 702-363-1921
www.redrockcanyon.blm.gov/ on the Internet

IN AN EMERGENCY

Call: 911 or 702-293-8998 collect.

HOW TO GET THERE

The park is located twenty miles west of Las Vegas, Nevada via Nevada 159 (West Charleston Boulevard) or Nevada 160.

PARK OVERVIEW

The park was established in 1967. In 1990 special legislation supported by the Nevada congressional delegation, changed the status of the recreation lands to a national conservation area, the seventh to be designated nationally. The unique geologic features, plants, and animals of Red Rock Canyon represent some of the best examples in the Mojave Desert.

The most significant geologic feature of Red Rock Canyon is the Keystone Thrust Fault. About sixty-five million years ago, it is believed that two of the earth's crustal plates collided with such force that part of one plate of grey limestone was thrust up and over the younger red sandstone. The Keystone Thrust Fault extends from the Cottonwood Fault (along Highway 160), thirteen miles northward to the vicinity of La Madre Mountain where it is obscured by more complex faulting.

SAFETY

Always carry plenty of water, whether planning to hike or just driving through. Set strict guidelines with your group for rock scrambling and climbing; even short falls can be fatal. Watch where you put your hands and feet, especially in warm weather when snakes are most active.

VISITOR ACTIVITIES

More than one million visitors each year enjoy spectacular desert landscapes, climbing and hiking opportunities, and interpretive programs. This 83,100-acre area provides a thirteen-mile scenic drive, more than twenty miles of hiking trails, picnic areas, and a visitor center.

VISITOR SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The visitor center has water, telephones, and restrooms. There is one primitive campground that is first come, first served. No water is available. Ask at the visitor center for directions. Other visitor services are available in nearby towns.

FEES

There is a \$5 entrance fee per vehicle.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The thirteen-mile scenic drive is open 7:00 a.m. to dusk. The visitor center is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

HOW TO SCHEDULE A FIELD TRIP

Red Rock Canyon offers numerous locations for field trips. Reservations are required for stops at the visitor center and the Children's Discovery Trail. This trail is located at Lost Creek Canyon and is less than one-mile round trip. A free booklet that accompanies the marked trail is available to visiting school groups. The booklet, which is geared to elementary age children, discusses flash floods, plants, animals, riparian zones, and cultural resources. Arrangements

THE PARKS

to receive the booklets are made at the time of making reservations. A pre-visit packet and video will be sent before the visit date.

If you have any questions or wish to schedule a field trip, contact the

environmental education coordinator at the visitor center at 702-363-1921 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Spring dates fill quickly so reserve early.

Mojave Desert Parks

