



A Century of Wonder 1923 - 2023



LEWIS A. RAMSEY, *The Eternal City, View of Bryce Canyon*, 1926, oil on canvas, Courtesy of the Orton Geological Library, Ohio State

“YOU CAN PERHAPS IMAGINE MY SURPRISE AT THE INDESCRIBABLE BEAUTY THAT GREETED US, AND IT WAS SUNDOWN BEFORE I COULD BE DRAGGED FROM THE CANYON VIEW.” -J.W. HUMPHREY

What will you remember about the first time you saw Bryce Canyon? Rangers like to call a person’s first view their Bryce Moment: when the forested plateau rim suddenly gives way to a vast, sublime and chromatic expanse. Some have described it as “a cave without a ceiling”, others “a forest of stone.” What do you see in this landscape? What words could ever do it justice?

The earliest story we know of this land comes from the Southern Paiute, who have lived here since time immemorial and for whom this remains a sacred place. In these rock formations the Southern Paiute recognized terrible consequences: the Legend People, To-when-an-unga-wa, turned to stone by the trickster god Coyote for their bad deeds. As recounted by Kaibab Paiute elder Indian Dick in 1936, “You can see their faces, with paint on them just as they were before they became rocks. The name of that place is Angka-ku-wass-a-wits (red painted faces).” Though the plateau provided the Southern Paiute a generous bounty of food and shelter along their seasonal migrations, the canyon itself was avoided. Euro-American contact would later see their word for feelings of fear, “oo’doo”, mistranslated as a word for the rocks themselves, “hoodoo”.

In 1874 families from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began arriving in the valley east of the plateau. Among them was Ebenezer Bryce, his wife Mary, and their 10 children. It’s doubtful that a man as devout as Ebenezer actually described the canyon as “a hell of a place to lose a cow”, though perhaps “a poor place to loose (set free) a cow.” Either way, one can discern a truth in these words: though they may have appreciated its beauty, they were also fully occupied with survival in a landscape whose consequences could be severe.

Government surveyors also arrived in the 1870s and added their first impressions to the record. On the 1872



Sunset Point remains the heart of visitor experience in the park, in part thanks to its proximity to iconic hoodoos like Thor’s Hammer.

Wheeler survey, Grove Karl Gilbert would glimpse “a perfect wilderness of red pinnacles, the stunningest thing out of a picture.” Four years later U.S. Deputy Surveyor T.C. Bailey would stand at the rim and write of “thousands of red, white, purple, and vermilion colored rocks, of all sizes, resembling sentinels on the walls of castles, monks and priests in their robes, attendants, cathedrals and congregations [...] presenting the wildest and most wonderful scene that the eye of man ever beheld, in fact, it is one of the wonders of the world.”

Perhaps one of the most consequential experiences of this landscape would come some 40 years later in 1915. At the urging of one of his employees, U.S. Forest Service Supervisor J.W. Humphrey would ride 25 miles from his new office in Panguitch to a place we now call Sunset Point. The encounter completely changed his life. For years to come he would dedicate himself to writing the first articles, inviting the first photographers, and overseeing the construction of the first improved roads and trails that would one day bring the rest of us to our own Bryce Moment. *(continued on back)*

“...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life 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.”

National Park Service
Organic Act 1916

Welcoming the World to Bryce Canyon

As early as 1916, as J.W. Humphrey began his efforts to publicize the canyon to the world, he also anticipated that future visitors to this remote plateau would need a place to stay. His earliest attempts to interest the railroads in promoting the area were met with little interest. Nevertheless, articles in local and national publications ensured the word was out, and intrepid tourists began making their way along Humphrey's new fair-weather road to the plateau rim. By 1917 he had secured \$250 in federal funds to build 6,000 feet of trails into the canyon and began offering \$1 (~\$20 today) guided walks. These provided opportunities for visitors to explore the area by day, however those who lacked supplies for camping would depart by nightfall to seek accommodations elsewhere.

Early in the summer of 1919, nearby homesteaders Ruby and Minnie Syrett met visitors down from Salt Lake City and served them lunch. When the visitors asked if they could spend the night near the rim, the Syretts obliged with a tent, bedding, and supplies for an evening meal and breakfast. They spent the rest of that summer accomodating guests in much the same way. The following spring, the Syretts received verbal permission from the Utah State Land Board to build a 30-foot by 71-foot lodge they called "Tourist Rest" near present-day Sunset Point. In 1922 they would welcome and entertain 3,112 visitors, many of whom enjoyed bathing in a log tub made by Ruby from a hollowed-out pine tree or signing the doors of Tourist Rest, which served as an informal guest book.



That same summer, seeds planted by Humphrey and others began to take root as representatives from the Union Pacific Railroad began scouting the area for possible development. The establishment of Zion National Park and Grand Canyon National Park in 1909 brought attention to the beauty of the area, as well as the economic value in creating a southwestern tourist loop that would link rail travel with overland tours and upscale lodging along the way.






By the time Bryce Canyon National Monument was established in June 1923 the Union Pacific Railroad was in active negotiations over the land the Syretts had developed, recognizing it as a key location for future plans to accommodate their guests. National Park Service Director Stephen Mather encouraged the Union Pacific's development of nearby Zion National Park, but was sensitive to the appearance of a monopoly and insisted they form a subsidiary of "Utah people"—what would become The Utah Parks Company (UPC)—to oversee tourism, lodging, and other services in the region. Ultimately the Syretts would sell their property and water rights to the UPC for \$10,000 (~\$170,000 today).



1920s map of Union Pacific's "Grand Circle Tour"

Before the sale was even complete, architect Gilbert Stanley Underwood was hired by Union Pacific officials to survey Bryce Canyon for a new lodge. He selected a site north of Tourist Rest and about 700 feet back from the plateau rim to avoid any disruption of the natural scenery. Through his work to first

<p>A survey team headed by Lieutenant George C. Wheeler maps the geologic resources of the plateau. The Wheeler Report includes the first written description of area by Grove Karl Gilbert, "...a perfect wilderness of red pinnacles."</p>	<p>Livestock grazing consumes many plants that are a staple of the Southern Paiute diet and denies them access to cultivating grounds near water sources, leaving them with mostly unfarmable areas. Paiute populations fall up to 90% in some areas.</p>	<p>A.W. Stevens takes first known photographs.</p> 	<p>The National Park Service is created by Congress to manage parks and monuments in such a manner as to leave them unimpaired for future generations.</p>	<p>Utah Legislature passes a Joint Memorial recommending that "Temple of the Gods" National Monument be created.</p>	<p>Bryce Canyon National Monument proclaimed by President Warren G. Harding on June 8. Boundaries of the 9,760 acre monument extend roughly from modern Sunrise Point south to Paria View.</p> 	<p>Bill changes name back to "Bryce Canyon" on February 25. The requirements of the 1924 bill are later met. Bryce Canyon National Park is established on September 15. Management transfers from U.S. Forest Service to National Park Service.</p>
1872	1880s	August 1916	1919	1923	1923	1928

<p>1875</p>  <p>Ebenezer and Mary Bryce and their 10 children join 10 other Latter-day Saint families settling in the valley east of the park.</p>	<p>1891</p>  <p>Tropic Ditch diverts irrigation water from plateau through Mossy Cave area to newly founded town of Tropic.</p>	<p>1915</p> <p>Sevier National Forest Supervisor J.W. Humphrey views the canyon for the first time and begins publicity efforts to tell the world. This includes articles, photographs by A.W. Stevens, and a film by George Goshen sent to Washington D.C.</p>	<p>1920</p>  <p>Ruby and Minnie Syrett construct "Tourist Rest," providing food, lodging, and entertainment near modern-day Sunset Point.</p>	<p>1924</p> <p>After persistent campaigning by Utah Senator Reed Smoot, Congress establishes "Utah National Park" on June 7, with stipulation that state and Union Pacific-owned land within its boundaries must first belong to the United States.</p>	<p>1925</p>  <p>Governor George Dern and caravan travel through newly-completed Red Canyon tunnels to visit the new national monument.</p>	<p>1929</p>  <p>First year visitation is tracked. Park sees 21,997 visitors. 78% come by automobile, 22% by Union Pacific buses.</p>
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Caretakers and Characters

THE SOUTHERN PAIUTE PEOPLE
 Since time immemorial this has been the traditional territory of the Southern Paiute people. Bands did not live on the plateau year-round, but moved with the seasonal cycles of plants and animals. Bands nearest to this area included the YUHINGUH' KAWDUHTS'ENG (Porcupine Sitting People) to the north and AWVO'UTSENG (Semi-circular Cliffs People) to the east. As with all Southern Paiute traditional territories, this is sacred land.

EBENEZER BRYCE
 Ebenezer was a shipbuilder in Scotland before converting to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and immigrating to Utah. In the mid-1870s, he built a road into the nearby "pink cliffs" to make timber accessible. People started to call the amphitheater where the road ended "Bryce's Canyon." The Bryce family moved to what became Bryce, Arizona in 1880.

U.S. FOREST SUPERVISOR J.W. HUMPHREY
 After a transfer in 1915 to the Sevier National Forest at Panguitch, his first vision of the canyon was a revelation. He arranged for still photographs and movies to be made, which were sent to Washington D.C. and the Union Pacific Railroad. In 1916 he secured \$50 to build the first fair-weather road to the rim. He transferred again in 1919, but remembered his work to share Bryce Canyon as "the greatest accomplishment of my life".

REUBEN C. (RUBY) AND MINNIE SYRETT
 After homesteading a few miles from the canyon rim they would build the park's first lodge, Tourist's Rest, in 1920. Ruby Syrett ran a sawmill that provided timber for the Bryce Canyon Lodge. Their tradition of hospitality continues just outside the park at Ruby's Inn.

MAURICE COPE
 From running the campground to assisting visitors, giving guided walks to law enforcement--he was a generalist ranger, and Bryce Canyon's first permanent one. He would help with the layout of nearly all of the park's trails, and was especially proud of the Queen's Garden and Peekaboo Loop.

STEPHEN MATHER
 The National Park Service's visionary founding director. Mather would visit here in 1919, and suggested Bryce Canyon become Utah's first state park. After the state chose not to develop it, he later agreed to its incorporation into the NPS. Today a plaque honoring Mather sits near the Visitor Center flagpole.

THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC)
 Begun in 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Bryce Canyon hosted CCC camp NP-3 from 1934 - 1943 to work on infrastructure, landscaping, and insect control. Notable projects include the Under-the-Rim Trail, a shelter at Rainbow Point, and completion of the Fairyland Loop.





design the Zion Lodge, he would come to understand the needs of the National Park Service, and artfully interpreted the service's "Rustic Style" as it would be expressed at Bryce Canyon. Construction lasted from 1924 until 1927, with timber supplied from the adjacent national forest and limestone quarried from a site one and a half miles away. Heavy log

1930s Gearjammers and Lodge Staff "singaway"

columns, the wooden inlay of the lobby walls, its limestone façade, wicker furniture, and especially the wave-patterned roof shingles (intended to suggest the swaying of ponderosa pines) were all intended to help Underwood's lodge and its surrounding cabins harmonize with their surroundings.

When Bryce Canyon became a national park in 1928, crews were busy blasting their way through Zion's sandstone cliffs to complete the Zion-Mt. Carmel Highway and Tunnel. Completion of the highway and tunnel in June 1930 drastically shortened the trip between Zion, the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, Pipe Spring, Cedar Breaks, and Bryce Canyon, which ushered in the golden age of the "Grand Circle" loop tour between these parks. For those who could afford the all-expense tour, they would be driven, educated, and entertained by "gearjammers," bus drivers so named for the sound that came from the unsynchronized transmissions and the double-clutching required to shift gears.

Lodge employees awaited guests' arrival, and after dinner would entertain them with an "Employee Show," complete with dancing, variety shows, and a full swing band. National Park Service Ranger Naturalists also gave

programs in the evenings, including talks at a massive fire pit in front of the lodge (until it was removed by Ranger Maurice Cope in 1930). Once the time arrived for a tour to depart toward a new destination, the staff would gather in front of their parks' lodge and bid adieu with a "sing-a-way."



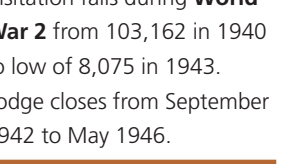


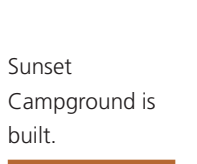
Meanwhile, most of the park's visitors continued to arrive by private automobile, many of them ready to camp. Until 1933, the park's campground was simply a cleared area for dispersed camping. The lack of organization took its toll on the park's native plants, and so when North Campground was built it followed eminent plant pathologist E.P. Meinecke's plan for one-way loop roads with tiers, parking spurs, and well-defined sites. The loop system extended south to the Sunrise Point area, to include the roads around Gilbert Stanley Underwood's "Camp Center" cafeteria (now the General Store) and the park's first ranger station and museum (now the adjacent High Plateaus Institute), both built in 1932 when visitation was around 34,000 people a year.





The years after World War II would see a significant rise in private automobile visitation, modernization of park infrastructure, expanded parking lots, and the eventual end of the UPC's Grand Circle bus tour. The last building constructed by the UPC would be the 1949 automobile Service Station—an attempt to adapt to these changes.



A modern "Gearjammer" at Bryce Point

And yet even as visitation exceeded 2.6 million visitors in 2018, traditions of ranger programs, guided horseback rides, dinner at the lodge, or camping beneath the stars have continued. You can even be driven, educated, and entertained by local "gearjammers" once again aboard the Bryce Canyon Shuttle.

<p>Mount Carmel Tunnel completed, dramatically shortening trip from Zion.</p>	<p>Union Pacific's Utah Parks Company (UPC) constructs Bryce Inn (now the General Store) near Sunrise Point.</p>	<p>NPS constructs first Administrative Office and Ranger Station (now High Plateaus Institute) near Sunrise Point.</p>	<p>Visitation falls during World War 2 from 103,162 in 1940 to low of 8,075 in 1943. Lodge closes from September 1942 to May 1946.</p>	<p>Service Station built by UPC near Lodge to accommodate a steep rise in post-war automobile visitation.</p>	<p>National Park Arrowhead logo is introduced.</p>	<p>Mission 66 modernization plans include a new Visitor Center and offices for the park.</p>	<p>Sunset Campground is built.</p>
<p>Wooden benches placed along rim.</p>					<p>The Lodge is painted a bright "modern" yellow.</p>		
<p>1930</p>	<p>1932</p>	<p>1932</p>	<p>1942-1946</p>	<p>1949</p>	<p>1954</p>	<p>1959</p>	<p>1962</p>

<p>1931 Park boundaries extended south to Podunk Point (now Rainbow Point), doubling size of park. Construction of Main Road from Lodge to Rainbow Point in progress until 1934.</p>	<p>1933 North Campground is built. Maurice Cope is hired as the park's first permanent ranger.</p>	<p>1934  Civilian Conservation Corps camp NP-3 arrives. Company 962 occupies a camp near the picnic area at Mile 4.</p>	<p>1938 State Road Commission arranges for the park road to be plowed by state road crews to allow the park to remain open year-round.</p>	<p>1939  First year fees are charged. A \$1 pass (~\$21 today) is good for both Bryce and Zion.</p>	<p>Oct 24 1947  United Airlines Flight 608 crashes in northern end of the park. All 52 passengers are lost in the crash.</p>	<p>1956 Park becomes administratively independent from Zion. First park superintendent is Glen T. Bean.</p>	<p>1961  Park's official non-profit partner, Bryce Canyon Association is established.</p>	<p>1969 Don Follows, Chief of Interpretation, begins the first astronomy programs at Bryce Canyon.</p>
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What's In a Name?

PAUNSAUGUNT PLATEAU

Derivative of a Paiute word meaning "place of the beaver". Beaver populations were decimated by the fur trade, but have begun to rebound along the Sevier River.

QUEEN'S GARDEN TRAIL

Laid out with help from Maurice Cope in 1929, its name comes from a hoodoo resembling Britain's Queen Victoria surrounded by a fanciful stone "garden".

SUNRISE AND SUNSET POINTS

"Ranger lore" suggests these names were likely a marketing ploy by the Lodge, implying views for both times of day were just a short walk away (though both views face east). Rangers often recommend the opposite time of day to visit each.

PARIA VIEW

From a Paiute word meaning "muddy water", which characterizes this tributary of the Colorado River.

NAVAJO LOOP

Was previously part of a network of trails named for Native American tribes. Trails included the Paiute, Ute, and Comanche Trails. The Navajo Trail is now known as Wall Street, and Two Bridges is the former Comanche Trail. The Paiute and Ute Trails have eroded away.

YOVIKAMP POINT

Derivative of a Paiute word meaning "pine tree ridge". The Paiute word for the large ponderosa pines found in this area is "yooveemp".

INSPIRATION POINT

Originally called "Tropic View" and "President Harding Point" after the president that established Bryce Canyon National Monument. Maps show the new name by 1930.

WALL STREET

One of many architectural names. Its parallel walls of rock resembled the streets of New York to early visitors.

THOR'S HAMMER

Named for the Norse god, likely around 1919 when the park name "Temple of the Gods" was in use.

RAINBOW POINT

Originally "Po Dunk Point" after a Southern Paiute man who became lost in the area. Rainbows can be common here as summer afternoon storms pass and the sun sinks in the west.

PEEKABOO LOOP

Laid out by Maurice Cope in the early 1930s. The name reportedly comes from the trail's many turns and tunnels and the fact that one would see a horse appear well before its rider.

THE GRAND STAIRCASE

Sequence of colorful cliffs stretching from Grand Canyon to Bryce Canyon. Geologist Clarence E. Dutton named each for their color: Chocolate, Vermilion, White, Gray, and Pink at the top. Bryce Canyon contains both the Pink and Gray Cliffs.



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Special Thanks

Bryce Canyon Association, our park partners, and all the staff of Bryce Canyon National Park present, past and future.

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

A Century of Wonder (continued)

A year later, Ruby and Minnie Syrett would also travel from Panguitch to a place north of the modern park boundaries where Ruby's Inn now stands. They chose to homestead there, completely unaware of the geologic wonder so close by. It was six weeks before a rancher visiting from the valley below suggested they go and look. Stepping to the rim, "They were speechless, just stood and looked. When they could talk, they could only whisper." The experience would change their lives too, and they soon began providing meals and lodging to the area's tourists—a tradition that continues to this day.

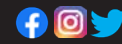
These efforts to share this place with the world would ultimately help lead to the protection of Bryce Canyon for future generations, first as a national monument in 1923 and then as a national park in 1928. In 100 years much has changed here, including the otherworldly geology. Though the hoodoos took

tens of millions of years to form and thousands of years to be shaped by weathering and erosion, we can now watch them change over decades and even collapse and disappear overnight. Their size, lifespan, and character are all on a human scale, creating a unique intimacy between the otherworldly and the familiar.

In the words of Charley Bullets of the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, "Each environment has a spirit and each spirit needs to be honored and recognized when you're visiting them." When you stand along the plateau rim listening to the oceanic sound of wind in the pines or hike the winding trails below vibrant hoodoos and the chatter of swallows, consider what makes the experience of being here unlike any other environment on this planet.

Whatever your personal experience, it is difficult to visit a place as wonderful as Bryce Canyon National Park and leave unchanged. Whether you

Centennial Events



These events are only the beginning!

Follow along throughout the centennial year on the park's social media: go.nps.gov/BryceSocial
Share your centennial experiences using the hashtag #BRYCE100

Historic Photo Exhibit April through November at Bryce Lodge	Utah Symphony Utah Opera August 10
Utah Prairie Dog Day May 11	All Employee Reunion August 24 - 26
Centennial Celebration and Concert June 8	Plein Air "Paint Out" September 18
Astronomy Festival June 14 - 17	Heritage Days September 28 - 30
Bryce Canyon Butterfly Count July 8	Annular Eclipse October 14
Geology Festival July 14 - 15	Christmas Bird Count December 16

Additional events may be added throughout the year. Be sure to check the park's calendar page at go.nps.gov/BryceCalendar

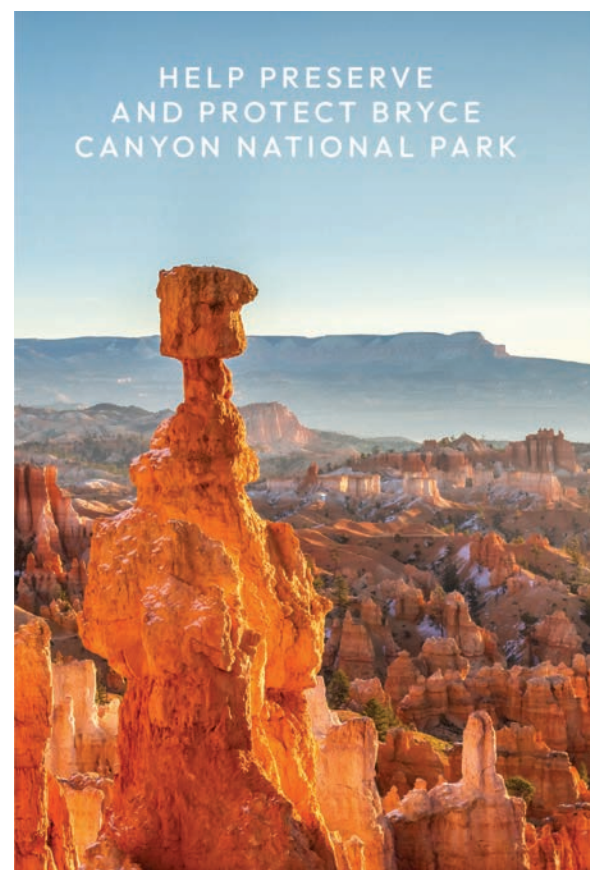


experience a complete re-sensitization to beauty, or a feeling too subtle to notice at first, something within may draw you back, again and again.

And as this Century of Wonder ends and another begins, we certainly hope you will return again and again to witness one of the fastest-changing geologic landscapes in the world change along with yourself.

Utah Parks Company donates all buildings to NPS.	Major rehabilitation of the Bryce Canyon Lodge. Interior is gutted to restore its 1920s character. Work continues through 1989.	Shuttle Bus System begins operation.	Olympic torch passes through park on its way to SLC Winter Olympics.	First Astronomy Festival is held.	First Geology Festival is held.	3,947 acre Bridge Fire becomes the largest wildfire in park history along Miles 8 to 10 of the Main Road.	~40 million year-old hymenoptera (wasp) cocoon chambers discovered after an inspection of a rockfall.	Bryce Canyon National Park celebrates 100 years since its establishment as a national monument.
1972	1986	2000	2002	2007	2009	2015	2023	
1975	1985	2001	May 23 2006	2008	2016			
After being listed as an endangered species in 1972, the Utah Prairie Dog is reintroduced to park meadows.	Sunrise and Sunset Motels built near Lodge to provide more modern accommodations. These replace most of the park's standard cabins, though a few remain near the Lodge.	Visitor Center expansion and rehabilitation adds additional floors, office and bookstore space to Mission 66 building.	An estimated 400 to 500 tons of rock falls in the Wall Street section of Navajo Loop. Thankfully no one is injured. Stairs are built through the rubble.	Last time California Condors were documented within the park.	"The Sentinel" hoodoo above Navajo Loop falls.			
					100th Anniversary of National Park Service. After exceeding 1 million visitors in 1992, visitation exceeds 2 million visitors for the first time.			

Supporting Bryce Canyon for Years to Come



HOODOO YOU LOVE? If your experience of Bryce Canyon National Park feels like an ongoing love story, you're not alone. The Bryce Canyon Association is here to channel that love into meaningful support.

The Bryce Canyon Association (BCA) is dedicated to assisting the National Park Service in furthering its scientific, educational, historical, and interpretive activities. The BCA's mission is to enhance your appreciation and enjoyment of this national park.

First established as the park's official non-profit partner in 1961, the BCA and its members have contributed over 10 million dollars in support of:

- Free publications (like this one!)
- Annual festivals and special events
- The Junior Ranger program
- Resource management research and activities
- Cultural youth outreach programs
- Scholarships and internship opportunities
- Search and Rescue equipment and supplies
- Infrastructure projects
- Bryce Canyon's recycling program

YOUR VISITOR CENTER PURCHASES DIRECTLY SUPPORT BRYCE CANYON! Through exclusive publications, merchandise, and programs the BCA helps people not only better understand and connect with the park but directly support its mission with their purchases.



BRYCE CANYON ASSOCIATION

Ready to do more? By joining the Association, you take an active role in your park's future. Members also enjoy exclusive benefits, including discounts at more than 400 Public Lands Alliance stores around the country.
Learn more at BryceCanyon.org