



A Land of Many Stories

The southern Idaho parks capture the long history of this region, a story that has been shaped by the movement of water and lava, as well as the movement of people over many thousands of years. Some of the oldest remnants date back about 2.5 billion years, when the most ancient granite of **City of Rocks** was formed.

Much younger stories are recorded in the rock layers of **Hagerman Fossil Beds**, exposed along the steep bluffs above the Snake River. Ancient but familiar fossil creatures offer clues to a wetter climate that existed here 4 to 3 million years ago. Now-extinct species of horses, ground sloths, mastodons, and saber-toothed cats thrived in lush grassland and woodland habitats that have long since turned to sagebrush steppe.

The Shoshonean peoples, or *Newenew*, have called this place home since time immemorial, moving with the seasons across vast plains of sagebrush and lava, through mountains, and along the winding Snake River. The *Newenew* were here to witness the series of volcanic eruptions that formed **Craters of the Moon**. The last of these took place only 2,000 years ago, leaving behind a scenic landscape of lava flows, cinder and spatter cones, and caves.

As emigrants passed through southern Idaho on the historic Oregon and California Trails in the mid-1800s, they left behind signatures on the granite at City of Rocks and wagon ruts at Hagerman Fossil Beds. Some of the newcomers settled here and began to transform the landscape, and the Shoshonean peoples too found their lives irreversibly changed.

Decades later, at the beginning of the Second World War, thousands of Japanese Americans were removed from their homes along the West Coast and incarcerated at sites like **Minidoka**. Today, the historic site shares the stories of survivors and commemorates the Nisei who courageously served in the armed forces.



Today, these four parks help us better understand some of the complicated national and global issues we now face, from a changing climate to civil rights. They also offer opportunities for rest, connection, and recreation. Enjoy hiking, camping, birding, caving, rock climbing, and more!

To make the most of your visit, plan ahead and arrive prepared. Check the last page of this guide for important safety information and park regulations to know before you go. The following pages also offer introductions to the four park sites, but be sure to check park websites or contact a ranger for the most up-to-date information.



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Welcome to the National Parks of Southern Idaho!

Whether you're visiting for a few hours, a few days, or perhaps even longer, we're glad you're here and we are committed to ensuring you have the best visit possible. We encourage you to stop by one of our visitor centers before starting your exploration. There you'll find key information and insight on how to make the most of your stay.

These four parks represent a wonderful cross-section of the more than 400 units that make up the National Park System. Here in Idaho, we partner with a variety of organizations and other agencies—the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, the Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Craters of the Moon Natural History Association, Friends of Minidoka, and Discover Your Northwest—to help provide a wide variety of opportunities and experiences.

We thank you in advance for actively helping to take care of these special places by staying on roads and trails, putting litter in its place, and taking only photos. Have a safe and enjoyable visit.


Wade Vagias
Superintendent

Wallace Keck
Superintendent

Craters of the Moon
Minidoka
Hagerman Fossil Beds

City of Rocks





One App, All Parks

Download the official National Park Service app, available free for iOS and Android

PHOTO: NPS/WALLACE KECK



City of Rocks
National Reserve



National Park Service
US Department of
the Interior

Idaho Department of
Parks & Recreation

Visitor Center

3035 Elba-Almo Road
Almo, ID 83312

Hours & Information

www.nps.gov/ciro
(208) 824-5901

Connect

@CityofRocksNPS



PHOTO: NPS/STEF LACY



Craters of the Moon
National Monument &
Preserve



National Park Service
Bureau of Land
Management
US Department of
the Interior

Robert Limbert Visitor Center

Located on Hwy 20/26/93 at
1266 Craters Loop Road
Arco, ID 83213

Hours & Information

www.nps.gov/crmo
(208) 527-1300

Connect

@CratersoftheMoonNPS



City of Rocks

Hidden in the Albion Mountains of southern Idaho, City of Rocks rises quietly from the shadows like an ancient city in ruins. Granite spires towering 700 feet and giant monoliths of timeless age stand guard around Circle Creek Basin. Silence is common here, though the land tells many stories.

City of Rocks has been managed in close partnership with Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation since 1988. Today the partners work to preserve the story and artifacts of the California Trail (1843–1882), including views and landscapes, ruts, and signatures. New interpretive wayside exhibits, created in collaboration with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, help to tell this nationally-significant story of emigration into the homeland of the Shoshonean peoples.

City of Rocks was a place of rest and recreation long before it became a climbers’ destination. Generations of local residents have played, picnicked, hunted, and camped here. The reserve has also become an outdoor classroom to study some of the oldest exposed rock west of the Mississippi River. Scientists are also discovering that the reserve is uniquely located at a biogeographic crossroads, where plants and animals of three unique ecosystems collide.

City of Rocks is open year-round. Stop by the visitor center in the gateway community of Almo for more information and resources.

Things to Do



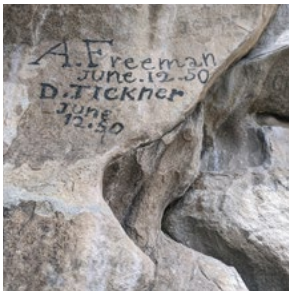
NPS/ STEFI LACY



NPS/ WALLACE KECK



NPS/ WALLACE KECK



NPS/ STEFI LACY

Hiking

Explore 22 miles (35 km) of hiking trails through this unique landscape. Trail maps are available at the visitor center.

Rock Climbing

Explore over 600 climbing routes, ranging in difficulty from 5.6 to 5.14. Guidebooks are available at the visitor center.

Birding

One of the top birding destinations in Idaho, with 183 documented species! Visit the park’s website to download a free checklist.

Historic Sites

View remnants of the California Trail and the signatures left in axle grease by emigrants in the mid-1800s.

Craters of the Moon

President Calvin Coolidge described Craters of the Moon as, “a weird and scenic landscape, peculiar to itself,” when he established the original monument in 1924. In 1970, Congress created the Craters of the Moon Wilderness, the first to be designated in the National Park system. Just a few years ago, the monument was recognized as an International Dark Sky Park for its spectacular stargazing. Craters of the Moon continues to be a strange and wonderful place that inspires lasting impressions.

The park contains three young lava fields formed by volcanic eruptions originating from a 52-mile long tear in the earth’s crust, known as the Great Rift. Eruptions began about 15,000 years ago and continued until only 2,000 years ago. The resulting volcanic features appear to have happened yesterday and will likely continue tomorrow.

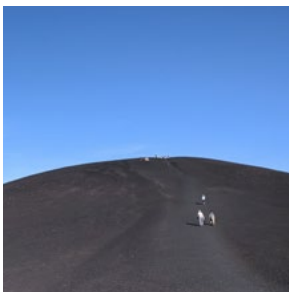
The combination of harsh, young volcanic terrain and the extremes of a high desert climate have produced a diversity of habitats. The plants and animals that live here display remarkable adaptations that allow them to survive and thrive. Craters is home to a variety of birds, rodents, and larger mammals like deer and pronghorn.

Start your adventure at the visitor center, then drive the 7-mile (11 km) Loop Road for trails, caves, and stunning views!

Things to Do



NPS/ JACOB W. FRANK



NPS/ STEFI LACY



MATT DIETERICH



NPS/ JACOB W. FRANK

Scenic Driving

Drive the scenic 7-mile (11 km) Loop Road. Enjoy views from the car, or stop along the way to hike, stroll, picnic, and more.

Hiking

From short, paved trails to moderate-difficulty hikes, there’s something for everyone! Check the park website or app, or ask a ranger for trail information.

Stargazing

Stay up late for spectacular stargazing and astrophotography opportunities at this International Dark Sky Park.

Caving

Explore the park’s caves, formed by underground rivers of lava. To protect bats, pick up a free permit from the visitor center before entering any cave.





Minidoka National Historic Site

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior

Visitor Center

1428 Hunt Road
Jerome, ID 83338

Hours & Information

www.nps.gov/miin
(208) 825-4169

Connect

@MinidokaNationalHistoricSiteNPS







Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

Thousand Springs Visitor Center

17970 US Hwy 30,
one mile north of the town of Hagerman.

Hours & Information

www.nps.gov/hafo
(208) 933-4105

Connect

@HagermanFossilBedsNPS



Minidoka

Minidoka National Historic Site stands as a site of conscience and reflection in the Magic Valley.

A sentry guard tower, a historic military checkpoint station, and a barbed wire fence symbolize the unjust incarceration of over 13,000 Japanese Americans in the Idaho desert. Across the street, a World War II Honor Roll remembers those who served this country in the face of racial discrimination. The historic root cellar, mess hall, and barrack interpret a story that meets at the intersection of agriculture, civil rights, and community.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which authorized the exclusion and forced removal of over 110,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast. Allowed to bring with them only what they could carry, families were incarcerated in detention centers and later in concentration camps. Minidoka was one of these concentration camps.

We invite visitors to come and experience Minidoka for themselves. During the summer season, explore the visitor center exhibits, view the park film, and take a park ranger led tour of the historic buildings. Visitors may also enjoy a self-guided tour along our 1.6-mile (2.5 km) trail with outdoor exhibit panels. The historic site is open daily from sunrise to sunset.

Hagerman Fossil Beds

Hagerman Fossil Beds is world-renowned for its Pliocene-aged fossils. These ancient animals date to 4 to 3 million years ago and include the famous “Hagerman horse,” a predecessor of modern horses. Other notable finds include now-extinct species of mastodons, saber-toothed cats, beavers, otters, giant ground sloths, peccaries, tiny rodents, and a wide variety of birds.

Set aside for paleontological research in 1988, the fossil beds offer a world-class setting to conduct research. The fossils uncovered here can better enable the scientific community and the public to understand changing climates both past and future. Due to the fragile and hazardous location of the fossil beds, this area is closed to the public.

The new Thousand Springs Visitor Center, opened in Spring 2022, offers an information desk, ranger talks, and new fossil exhibits.

We are proud to partner with Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation for the construction and operation of the new visitor center. These six state park units of Thousand Springs offer excellent opportunities for hiking, kayaking, birding, and more.

Starting in late 2022, camping will also be available at the Billingsley Creek unit. Stop by the visitor center or visit parksandrecreation.idaho.gov for more information.

Things to Do



NPS/ STAN HONDA



RICHARD ALAN HANNON



RICHARD ALAN HANNON



NPS/ STAN HONDA

Guided Tours

Explore our demonstration block, including a barrack and mess hall, with a park ranger. Check the park website for tour times.

Exhibits

Discover the legacy of Japanese Americans, from immigration, to incarceration, to redress, to present-day activism.

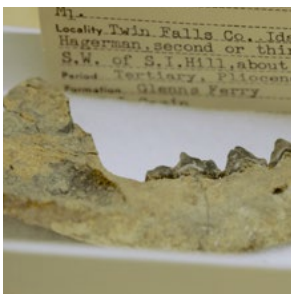
Park Film

A moving introduction to the story of Japanese American incarceration. The film is shown every hour on the half-hour during regular visitor center hours.

Walking Trails

Explore the historic site at your own pace. View Block 22, the baseball field, the root cellar, the Honor Roll, the guard tower, and interpretive exhibits.

Things to Do



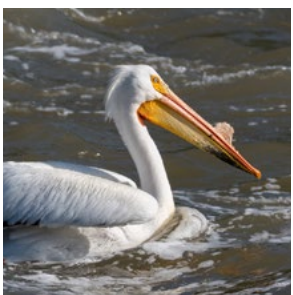
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NPS/ ALEX WILES

Fossil Exhibits

Explore the ancient life of Pliocene Hagerman with fossils on display at the new Thousand Springs Visitor Center.

Scenic Driving

Drive the park road along the river. Enjoy panoramic views and new interpretive exhibits at the Snake River and Oregon Trail Overlooks.

Hiking

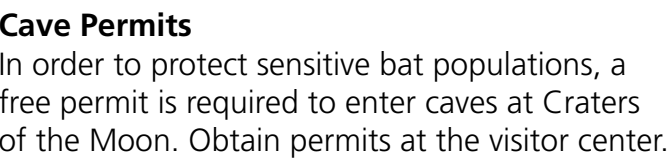
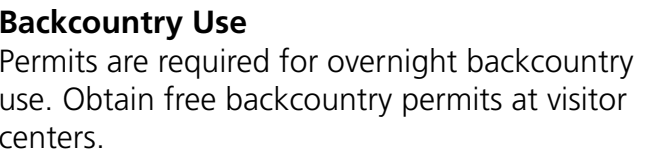
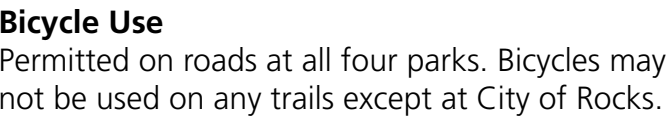
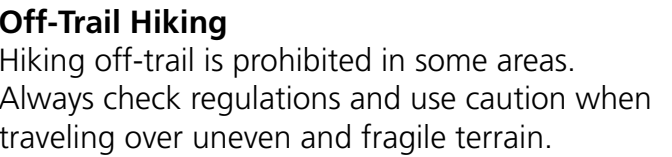
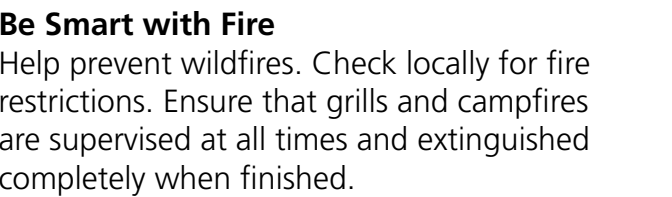
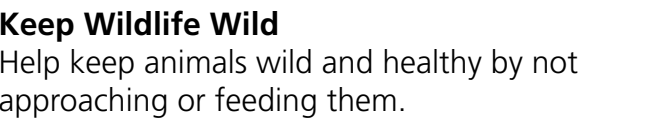
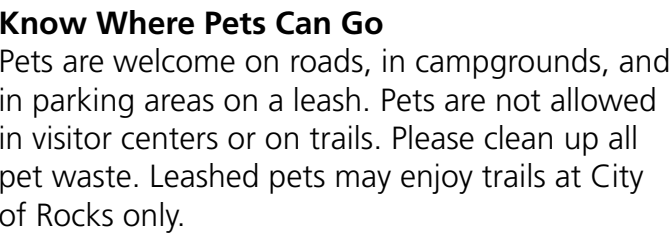
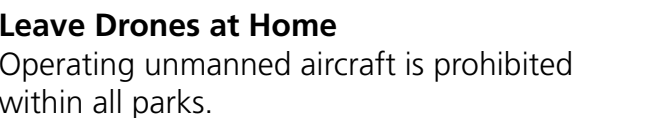
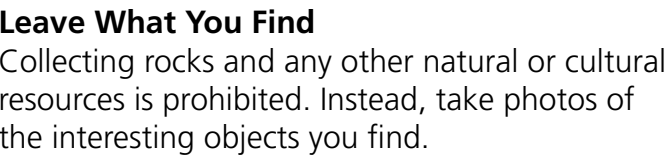
Hike the 3 mi (4.8 km, one-way) Emigrant Trail, which parallels visible remnants of the historic Oregon Trail.

Birding

Look for migrating and nesting birds on the Snake River, including waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and raptors.

A map of Idaho with major highways highlighted in red. The map includes labels for neighboring states: MONTANA to the north, WYOMING to the east, and UTAH to the south. Key landmarks and parks are labeled in green, including MINIDOKA NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, HAGERMAN FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT, CITY OF ROCKS NATIONAL RESERVE, CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT & PRESERVE, WEST YELLOWSTONE, YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, and GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK. Major cities and towns are marked with black dots: SUN VALLEY, TWIN FALLS, IDAHO FALLS, POCA TELLO, JAC KSON, and WEST YELLOWSTONE. Highway shields for routes 15, 20, 26, 84, 86, 89, 93, and 191 are shown. Arrows indicate directions: 'To Missoula' (north), 'To Boise' (west), and 'To Salt Lake City' (south).

Help protect your parks while you enjoy a safe and memorable visit. Regulations vary by site. Contact parks for additional information.



	City of Rocks	Craters of the Moon	Minidoka	Hagerman Fossil Beds	West Yellowstone	Jackson
City of Rocks		150 mi 3 hrs	80 mi 1.5 hrs	110 mi 2 hrs	260 mi 4 hrs	245 mi 4.25 hrs
Craters of the Moon	150 mi 3 hrs		90 mi 1.75 hrs	100 mi 2 hrs	190 mi 3 hrs	175 mi 3.25 hrs
Minidoka	80 mi 1.5 hrs	90 mi 1.75 hrs		40 mi 45 min	265 mi 4.25 hrs	245 mi 4 hrs
Hagerman Fossil Beds	110 mi 2 hrs	100 mi 2 hrs	40 mi 45 min		295 mi 4.5 hr	275 mi 4.5 hr
West Yellowstone	260 mi 4 hrs	190 mi 3 hrs	265 mi 4.25 hrs	295 mi 4.5 hr		125 mi 2.5 hrs
Jackson	245 mi 4.25 hrs	175 mi 3.25 hrs	245 mi 4 hrs	275 mi 4.5 hr	125 mi 2.5 hrs	

The **City of Rocks** entrance and visitor center are located south of the businesses in the town of Almo, off of U.S. Highway 77.

The **Craters of the Moon** visitor center and Loop Drive are located on U.S. Highway 20/26/93. There is no access to the visitor center via any unpaved roads.

Minidoka National Historic Site, known locally as Hunt Camp, is located near Jerome, Idaho off of U.S. Highway 25 and Hunt Road. It is **not** located in Minidoka, Idaho.

The **Hagerman Fossil Beds** visitor center is in the town of Hagerman on U.S. Highway 30. The monument's trails and overlooks are located along the Snake River on Bell Rapids Road, south of Hagerman.

City of Rocks	Craters of the Moon	Minidoka	Hagerman Fossil Beds
Entrance Fees			
National Reserve: Free	\$20/vehicle or federal pass	Free	Free
State Park: \$7/vehicle			
Campgrounds			
City of Rocks: 64 RV/tent/group sites	Lava Flow Campground: 42 RV & tent sites (first-come, first-served only)	None	Camping available at Billingsley Creek starting in 2022. Check park website for more information.
Castle Rocks State Park: 38 RV & tent sites (Reservations accepted*)	Group campsite (by reservation only**)		
Ranger Programs			
The Southern Idaho parks offer a variety of ranger talks and tours, including Junior Ranger programs. Some programs are only available seasonally or on weekends. Check park websites or contact park staff for a current schedule of programs.			
Become a Junior Ranger			
Earn a special badge or patch! Request a Junior Ranger booklet at any visitor center.			

* Reservations for City of Rocks and Castle Rocks can be made at IdahoStateParks.ReserveAmerica.com or by calling 888-922-6743.
** Reserve the Craters of the Moon group campsite at Recreation.gov or by calling 877-444-6777