



National Park Service
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Death Valley National
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Death Valley National Park News Release

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SCOTTY'S CASTLE SPECIAL HIKING TOURS OF LOWER VINE RANCH

Starting January 9th and ending April 11th, 2009, Lower Vine Ranch hiking tours are scheduled for every Friday and Saturday. Tours will begin at 10:30am. Hiking tours are limited in size to 15 participants and advance reservations may be made by calling Death Valley National Park at 760/786-2392 between 8:30am and 4:30pm. A limited number of first-come, first-served tickets may be available. Tickets will be \$15.00 per person and all proceeds will benefit the interpretive and education program at Scotty's Castle.

Visitors to Scotty's Castle are often surprised to learn that Scotty actually lived a few miles from Scotty's Castle at a place called Lower Vine Ranch. For decades, the Lower Vine Ranch was closed to the public in order to protect the historic structures and natural springs.

In the spring of 2005, Death Valley National Park began offering several special hiking tours of Lower Vine Ranch, part of the Death Valley Scotty National Historic District. With the success of the last three year's tours, Death Valley National Park will again be offering special hiking tours of Lower Vine Ranch this winter and spring.

Lower Vine Ranch was the primary residence of Walter Scott, AKA "Death Valley Scotty," miner, con-man and entertainer. The redwood ranch house and outbuildings were constructed in the 1920s by Scotty's friend and benefactor, Albert Johnson, at the same time that Scotty's Castle was being built as the Johnson's primary vacation home in Death Valley.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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

Lower Vine Ranch is normally closed to the public so these special programs are a rare opportunity to see this unique historic property.

Logistics: Individuals with reservations should visit the Scotty's Castle Ticket Office at least 30 minutes in advance of their tour time on the day of their program to pay for their tickets and receive directions to the start of the tour. After purchasing tickets, ticketed visitors should then drive 5 miles to the trailhead to meet the ranger. All visitors should bring drinking water, bug repellent and sunscreen. Flash photography is permitted. Each tour will take approximately 2.5 hours and will involve a 2 mile round-trip hike. Lower Vine Ranch is not handicapped accessible and access is by foot over a rough dirt trail so please wear sturdy walking shoes. Restroom facilities are not readily available at Lower Vine Ranch and ticketed visitors are encouraged to use restrooms at Scotty's Castle or Grapevine Ranger Station prior to their tour time.

For more information about these special programs or to make reservations, please call 760/786-2392.

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