

Press Kit

For more information, contact
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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lake Mead
National Recreation Area



About Lake Mead National Recreation Area

Located just minutes from Las Vegas, Lake Mead National Recreation Area is a premier destination for millions of tourists and locals looking for a mix of adventure and natural beauty. More than 6 million people visit Lake Mead NRA each year, making it the fifth most-visited unit of the National Park System. At 1.5 million acres, the park is also the third largest area of the National Park Service, outside Alaska.

The lakes provide 290 square miles of water on which to boat, fish, swim, ski, sail and sun. Lake Mead is America's largest reservoir with depths surpassing 500 feet. Nearly 87 percent of the 1.5 million-acre area of Lake Mead NRA is land, containing a wealth of natural and cultural resources in a setting of rugged mountains, desert washes, sheer cliffs, and colorful soils and rock formations.

Created by Act of Congress in 1964 as the nation's first national recreation area, Lake Mead NRA stretches along nearly 140 miles of the old Colorado River channel between Nevada and Arizona. It includes both Lake Mead, created by Hoover Dam, and Lake Mohave, created by Davis Dam.

Three of America's four desert ecosystems—the Mojave, the Great Basin and the Sonoran Deserts—meet in Lake Mead NRA. As a result, this seemingly barren area contains a surprising variety of plants and animals, some of which may be found nowhere else in the world.

Lake Mead is home to desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, mountains lions, coyotes, kit fox, bobcat, ringtail cat, desert tortoise, numerous lizards and snakes, and a wealth of bird species. Threatened and endangered species such as the desert tortoise and peregrine falcon are found here, as well as ancient Colorado River fish species.

A long geological history can be seen from the 1.8-billion-year-old gneiss of Saddle Island to the lava flows capping Fortification Hill formed about 6 million years ago. Archeological and historical sites and remnants are evidence of 12,000 to 13,000 years of human occupation. The western most expansion of the Virgin Anasazi at Pueblo Grande de Nevada, the construction of the engineering marvel Hoover Dam, and the B-29 Cold War remnant are a few illustrations the rich national heritage found within Lake Mead NRA.

Lakes Mead and Mohave offer some of the country's best sport fishing. Largemouth bass, striped bass, rainbow trout, channel catfish, crappie and bluegill are found in both lakes.

Boating of all kinds is popular within Lake Mead NRA. Water-skiing and personal watercraft use are favorite activities on the broad expanses of open water. Sailboats and sailboards are also popular because of the dependable desert winds. The recreation area has seen increasing numbers of tour kayaks as that sport has grown in popularity. The recreation area provides a popular wilderness paddle experience in the scenic Black Canyon below the Hoover Dam. Swimming is the major form of water recreation during summer months when lake temperatures warm into the 80-degree range.

Nine developed areas are spread along the shores of lakes Mead and Mohave. These developments include a variety of services and facilities provided by the National Park Service and its concessioners, including food, lodging, boat rentals, groceries, sporting goods and more.

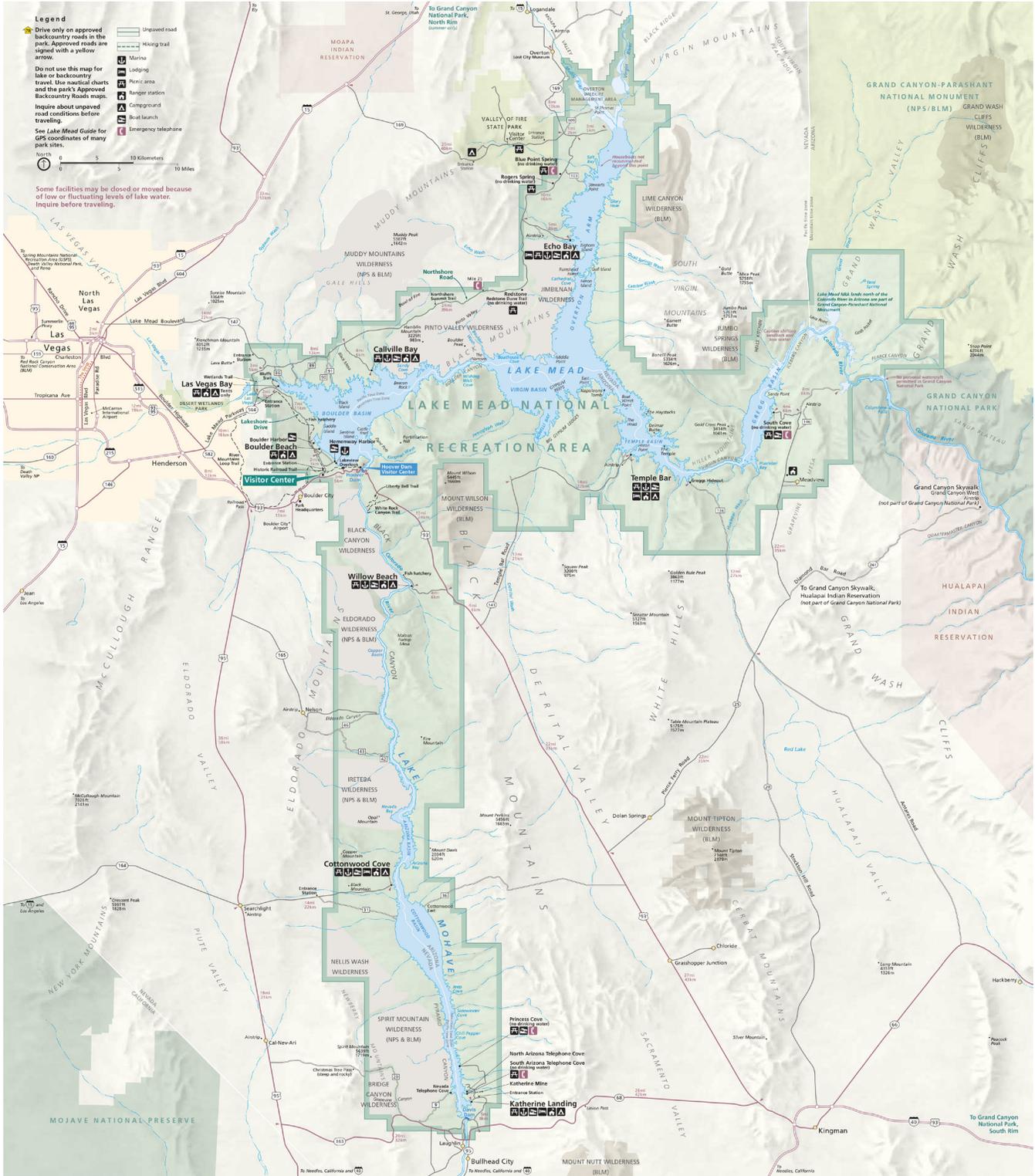
Along with the developed trails within Lake Mead NRA, hikers explore the backcountry. Hiking is allowed anywhere in the recreation area, and numerous destination sites and known routes are explored by individuals and active hiking groups in the cooler hiking season from November to March. Although off-road travel is prohibited, 800 miles of backcountry roads offer a variety of access and challenges to backcountry driving enthusiasts.

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Historic Timeline:

1936 – America’s largest reservoir was created with the completion of the Hoover Dam. The lake and surrounding area was named Boulder Dam Recreation Area. The dam was built from 1931-1936 and was officially dedicated Sept. 30, 1935.

1938 – The last citizen of the town of St. Thomas rowed away from his home after the waters of Lake Mead overcame the community.

1947 – Boulder Dam Recreation Area is renamed Lake Mead National Recreation Area after former chairman of the Bureau of Reclamation Dr. Elwood Mead. The area that would become Lake Mohave, following the construction of the Davis Dam, was added to the recreation area.

1948 – A B-29 Superfortress engaged in high altitude atmospheric research crashed into the Overton Arm of Lake Mead. The crew of five survived the crash, but the plane was lost in the depths of the lake. Local divers found the plane in 2001.

1952 – The Davis Dam, which created Lake Mohave was constructed from 1942-1950. It was officially dedicated Dec. 10, 1952.

1964 – Public Law 88-639 established Lake Mead National Recreation Area under the sole jurisdiction of the National Park Service.



Lake Mead Water Level Timeline:

The water levels at Lake Mead have visibly fluctuated over the years. Despite the fluctuations, the lake is still the largest reservoir in the United States with depths surpassing 500 feet. It is the fifth most visited unit of the National Park System and the premier inland water recreation area in the west.

February 1935	Lake begins to fill to 708.70 feet
July 1941	Lake Mead reaches 1220.40 feet
March 1956	Lake Mead drops to 1083.57 feet
July 1983	Lake Mead reaches 1225.44 feet (highest point)
November 2010	Lake Meads drops to 1081.94 feet (lowest point)
November 2013	1103.87 feet
Septmeber 2015	Projected to be 1079.99 feet

View full timeline at: <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/hourly/mead-elv.html>

View projections at: <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g4000/24mo.pdf>

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Fact Sheet

Size

- 1.5 million acres
- Land: 1.3 million acres
- Water: 200,000 acres

Annual Visitation

- 2012 – 6.3 million recreational visitors
- plus, 4.5 million vehicles on US Hwy 93

Natural Resources

- 900 plant species
- 500 animal species
- 24 rare and threatened species
- 9 designated wilderness areas

Cultural Resources

- 122,166 museum objects and archives
- 1,347 recorded archeological sites
- 23 historic structures
- 8 listed National Register Properties
- 2 Traditional Cultural Properties
- 18 affiliated tribes

Park Infrastructure

- \$1 billion in infrastructure
- 9 developed areas
- 6 major marinas
- 9 water and wastewater systems
- 340 buildings
- 240 miles of paved roads
- 800 miles of gravel or dirt roads
- 7 campgrounds with 955 sites

Economic Impact

- In 2011, park visitors spent \$246 million in nearby communities
- That spending supported 2,965 local jobs



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Frequent Recreation Activities

As the fifth most visited unit of the National Park System, Lake Mead National Recreation Area is the premier inland water recreation area in the west. It attracts visitors from around the world. Lake Mead NRA provides 290 square miles of water on which to boat, fish, swim, ski, sail and sun; however, nearly 87 percent of the 1.5-million-acre park is land, containing a wealth of natural and cultural resources just waiting to be explored. Recreation activities vary dependent upon weather conditions. During the summer months, when daytime temperatures surpass 100° F (37° C), visitors flock to the waters. In the winter, when temperatures and lake waters cool, visitors explore the rugged mountains, desert washes, sheer cliffs and area wildlife.

Boating
Fishing
Swimming
Hiking
Cycling
Scenic Driving
Picnics

Camping
Scuba Diving
Horseback Riding
Photography
Watching Wildlife
Backcountry Exploration
Wilderness Exploration



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Media Tours

Concessioners at Lake Mead National Recreation Area often accommodate media on complimentary tours. Below are some of the possible media tour options. If you are interested in requesting a media tour for an upcoming story, please email the Lake Mead National Recreation Area Public Affairs Office at christie_vanover@nps.gov with the following information:

- Media outlet
- Approximate circulation/viewers
- When and where the story is scheduled to run
- Proposed date of visit
- Number in group
- Type of tour requested
- If the concessioners are able to accommodate your request, they may require a letter from the editor/producer on company letterhead stating that you have been assigned to represent the organization in an editorial capacity at Lake Mead NRA.
- Bloggers may be asked to provide additional information, including web analytics.



Half-day tours

Hoover Dam Postcard Raft Tour – Board a motorized raft with an experienced tour guide for a guided 30-minute ride on the Colorado River below Hoover Dam that includes unique views of the Dam, the power plant and Black Canyon.

Lake Mead Cruises – Board a Mississippi-style paddlewheeler and take a calm cruise through the Boulder Basin to the Hoover Dam. The tour is narrated with the history of the Hoover Dam and Lake Mead.

Hoover Dam Kayak Adventure – Receive kayaking instructions and then venture out at the base of the Hoover Dam through the Black Canyon along the Colorado River.

Small Boat Excursion – The marinas at Lake Mead and Lake Mohave rent a variety of boats and personal watercraft. Aboard a small vessel, you can explore the lakes and their numerous coves.

Full-day tours

Black Canyon Raft Tour – This is a unique day trip, aboard a motor-assisted inflatable raft, through spectacular Black Canyon - the natural gorge of the Colorado River immediately below Hoover Dam. Enjoy and share in the history, desert wildlife and beauty of this otherwise inaccessible and rugged landscape.

Hoover Dam to Willow Beach Kayak Adventure – Similar to the half-day kayak tour, you'll receive instructions and then put in at the base of the Hoover Dam. Your adventure will continue down the Colorado River to Willow Beach.

Houseboat Excursion – The houseboats at Lake Mead NRA are full of amenities such as bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens, hot tubs, water slides and televisions. They are a luxurious way to explore the waters of Lake Mead and Lake Mohave.

There are numerous other businesses that have Commercial Use Authorization permits with the park who may be willing to provide complimentary media tours. Their services include, fishing, scuba diving, hiking, bicycling, motorized tours and more.

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Annual Events at Lake Mead National Recreation Area

The National Park Service, its concessioners, partners and permitted organizations conduct a variety of events each year that attract thousands of tourists and media. Below is a list of some of the more popular and unique events.

January

- **Eagle Survey** – Each year NPS staff conduct a winter count of bald eagles. 163 bald eagles were spotted in 2013.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** – Free entrance

March

- **Mountain Man St. Patrick's Day Run** – Half marathon that draws around 1,000 participants

April

- **National Park Week** – Free entrance and various activities
- **Junior Ranger Day** – Kids go through stations to learn about Lake Mead NRA and are then sworn in as Junior Rangers
- **BBSC Rage** – Triathlon that draws around 1,200 participants
- **Nevada Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights Month**
- **National Wildlife Week**
- **Great American Clean-up**

May

- **National Safe Boating Week** – The park participates in Wear Your Lifejacket to Work Day, Lifejacket World Record Day and hosts a partnership event to promote boater safety.
- **Memorial Day Media Day** – Media are invited on exclusive boat ride-alongs with park rangers and game wardens before Memorial Day Weekend
- **International Migratory Bird Day**

June

- **National Get Outdoors Day**
- **National Marina Day**
- **Free Fishing Day**

July

- **July 4th Damboree Celebration Parade**

August

- **NPS Anniversary** – August 25, 1916; free entrance; 2016 will mark the service's 100th anniversary

September

- **National Public Lands Day** – Sept. 28, free entrance
- **Ironman 70.3 World Championship** – Ironman event that draws around 2,000 athletes
- **WON Bass U.S. Open** – Bass fishing tournament that draws around 300 anglers

October

- **Lake Mead NRA Anniversary** – Oct. 8, 1964, Public Law 88-639 established Lake Mead National Recreation Area under the sole jurisdiction of the National Park Service; 2014 will mark the park's 50th anniversary
- **Southern Nevada Trails Day**
- **National Wildlife Refuge Week**
- **Make A Difference Day**
- **Pumpkin Man Triathlon** – Triathlon that draws around 1,300 athletes

November

- **Ragnar Relay** – The park's largest permitted event with around 8,000 participants.
- **Veterans Day Weekend** – Free entrance

December

- **Boat Parade of Lights**
- **Boulder City Electric Night Parade**



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Wild Vegas

The City of Las Vegas is a premier international entertainment destination. It is the largest tourist attraction in the United States, hosts more hotel rooms than any other city and is Southwest Airlines' largest service destination in a state where the number one industry is tourism. Las Vegas is a fast growing, ethnically diverse city that in many ways is demographically emblematic of the future of America.

Yet, even though millions of visitors travel through Las Vegas every year, relatively few of them associate Las Vegas with it's magnificent public lands and the opportunity to hike, bike, take pictures, rock climb, view wildlife or just gaze across a scenic overlook.

This region boasts some of America's most beautiful public lands, including the world's largest canyon, America's largest reservoir, the lowest and hottest spots in the United States, the largest national wildlife refuge in the lower 48 states and the most visited national conservation area in the country.

A half-day or day's drive will take you to internationally-recognized Wild Vegas destinations including Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and the Grand Canyon, Death Valley and Zion National Parks. The Southern Nevada Agency Partnership, in cooperation with Outside Las Vegas Foundation and the National Wildlife Refuge Association, have outlined six Wild Vegas routes for those who truly want to experience the wild side of Vegas.

Download the Wild Vegas brochure at <http://www.nps.gov/lake/parknews/upload/wild-vegas-full-opt.pdf>

Vegas Route

- Lake Mead National Recreation Area
- Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area
- Desert National Wildlife Refuge
- Spring Mountains National Recreation Area
- Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge

Grand Canyon Route

- Lake Mead National Recreation Area
- Havasu National Wildlife Refuge
- Kaibab National Forest
- Grand Canyon National Park
- Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
- Vermillion Cliffs National Monument
- Zion National Park

Utah Circle Route

- Red Cliffs National Conservation Area
- Zion National Park
- Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument
- Bryce Canyon National Park
- Capitol Reef National Park
- Canyonlands National Park
- Arches National Park

Great Basin Route

- Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge
- Great Basin National Park

Mojave Route

- Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area
- Desert National Wildlife Refuge
- Spring Mountain National Recreation Area
- Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
- Death Valley National Park
- Mojave National Preserve
- Amboy Crater
- Joshua Tree National Park
- Coachella Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Colorado River Route

- Lake Mead National Recreation Area
- Havasu National Wildlife Refuge
- Bill Williams National Wildlife Refuge
- Kofa National Wildlife Refuge
- Imperial National Wildlife Refuge
- Cibola National Wildlife Refuge