

Above: A Loggerhead shrike eating a lizard. Center: A Cooper's Hawk perches on the fence along the Union Pacific Railroad tracks across from the Kelso Depot.

The Mojave Desert is for the Birds

Hilary Clark, Park Ranger

THE BIRDS IN THE MOJAVE DESERT ARE unique and colorful as were the homesteaders that once staked their claim in this arid land. Regal golden eagles soar in the cobalt desert sky, while a black-crowned night heron preens along the shoreline of Lake Tuendae at Zzyzx. A covey of quail scurry through a desert wash, which, to author Robert Bateman, resemble “ornately costumed Victorians at a banquet.”

The character of these birds contradicts the age-old view of the desert as lifeless. They find ingenious ways of escaping the searing summer heat and staying insulated in the bitter winter cold. The Gambel’s quail has a body temperature of 107 degrees so it can continue to release heat until the ambient air reaches the same temperature. While this keeps quails from overheating, owls use gular fluttering as a natural cooling system. Owls flap the loose skin under their throat. This moves air over their mouth cavities.

Along with adaptations for keeping cool, birds’ ability to fly lifts them to higher elevations. This provides them an aerial view of natural water sources at desert springs and seeps, and also at tanks and wells. Biologists believe that for birds, changes in vegetation from upland to riparian are a visual cue for spotting sources of water. Year-round residents learn from their parents where forage and water sources are located.

While some birds glide high above the landscape, others, like roadrunners, stay closer to the ground. The roadrunner uses its zygodactyl feet to run upwards of fifteen miles per hour. Although, you won’t see a coyote chasing it, as the famous cartoon would have you believe, you might see a lizard or rattlesnake dangling from its beak. Their featherless scaly legs, an attribute that they share with thrashers and quail, help release heat into the atmosphere. During cold nights, roadrunners enter a state of torpor, slowing their metabolism down to a snail’s pace. In the mornings, they turn their backs toward the sun, exposing their black-pigmented skin which absorbs heat.

Much smaller than the roadrunner, the Logger-



NPS/HILARY CLARK



NPS/RANA KNIGHTEN

Above: A Costa’s hummingbird is one of at least 5 species that nests in, and migrates through the Mojave Desert. Before starting their migration, hummingbirds will gain 25 to 40 percent of their body weight, gorging on nectar and insects.

head shrike also dines on lizards, and pursues its prey with equal vigor. Its method of capturing lizards seems unusually violent and has even earned it the nickname “butcher bird.” This black-masked predator with a gray cap catches lizards with its sharp beak, and then proceeds to impale them on a thorn or barbed wire fence. Male shrikes give the term being “a good provider” a whole new meaning, impaling more lizards than they can eat to attract potential female mates.

Shrikes are crafty in using their environment to capture prey, while ravens use their resources in very clever ways. Perhaps poet Edgar Allan Poe saw cunning in their countenance when he described one in *The Raven*, “And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming,” for these birds use their beaks as scissors and they fashion hooks from twigs and rakes from stiff, dead leaves. They carry these tools in their beak, from one place to the next, reusing them if needed. Raven populations have exploded in the Mojave Desert due to an increase in development—you’ll see them at most every dumpster. This is bad news for tortoises. Ravens have been observed teaching their young to feed on tortoise hatchlings.

Ravens are scavengers, and share that trait with turkey vultures. Perceived as unattractive according to societal conventions of beauty, the turkey vultures’ bald red heads are highly practical for feeding on dead carrion. Having a featherless head prevents vultures from contracting diseases and also helps dissipate heat. Along with a bald head, turkey vultures get relief from the heat in a unique way. They urinate on their chicken-like legs which absorb the waste, and provide a source of evaporative cooling.

Although some people might view the desert as devoid of life, for many birds, it is their lifeblood. The next time you’re in the preserve, pull over and scan the surrounding desert with your eyes and ears. Watch for a great-horned owl perched on a Joshua tree. Listen for the guttural “kerr” of a hawk or the raucous call of a jay. Mojave National Preserve is truly for the birds.

Welcome to Mojave!

As the new superintendent, I want to extend my personal welcome to Mojave National Preserve. Although I moved here from Glacier National Park in Montana, I began my National Park Service career in the desert southwest, so it’s great to be back! The Mojave Desert is a place where you can spread your eyes.

Cooler temperatures make fall and winter a perfect time to visit the Mojave Desert, and the softening light as the sun passes lower in the sky offers a bolder, warmer palette for desert photographers. We have several photography exhibitions planned for the fall and winter months in the Desert Light Art Gallery at the Kelso Depot Visitor Center. These exhibits run from two to three months, so stop in often to see what’s new.

Mojave’s landscape varies tremendously as you travel around the preserve, and I encourage you to take short walks in various areas. Inside this guide, you’ll find information on how to visit the Kelso Dunes, Cinder Cones Lava Beds, and the Joshua tree woodland on Cima Dome. On the east side of the park, campgrounds, and hiking trails are available for those who have more time to explore.

Over one thousand miles of dirt roads await desert explorers in street-legal vehicles, providing access to old mining sites, springs, and roadside camps. Some routes require high-clearance vehicles and/or four-wheel drive, and road conditions change rapidly during rainy weather, so check with a ranger before heading out.

If you would like to learn more about what to see and do, talk to the rangers at the Kelso Depot Visitor Center or Hole-in-the-Wall. Visit our website, or call the headquarters information desk. Websites and phone numbers are listed on page two.

Stephanie R. Dubois

Stephanie Dubois
Superintendent

3. Mojave Roads

Getting around Mojave National Preserve, the third largest unit of the National Park System in the contiguous United States, can be challenging. It need not be. Plan ahead and prioritize; familiarize yourself with Mojave’s paved and dirt roads as well as the major sites to see along the way. And remember—you’ll never see it all in one day (but you can always come back)...

4. Looking Back

Glenn DeVoge, now 86, remembers going to the one-room school house at Kelso during the Great Depression. Now, the National Park Service is in the process of renovating this historic structure, so visitors can learn about the lives of Glenn DeVoge and others who lived and went to school in this desert frontier town.

6. Campgrounds

Mojave National Preserve is a camper’s paradise. Developed campgrounds, roadside, and backcountry camping offer opportunities for individuals and groups of diverse ages, interests, and skills. Careful planning and knowledge of camping rules and regulations will help ensure an enjoyable and safe experience for you, future visitors, and the fragile desert environment...

Essential Information...2

Nature & Science...4

Faces & Places...5

Camping...6

Hiking...7

Mojave National Preserve Map...8





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mojave National Preserve

Established in 1994, Mojave National Preserve encompasses 1.6 million acres ranging in elevation from 800' near Baker to 7,929' at Clark Mountain. Although most of the park lies in the Mojave Desert, the south-east section grades into the Sonoran Desert, and elements of the Great Basin Desert are found at higher elevations east of the Granite, Providence and New York mountains.

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

A Hike with History

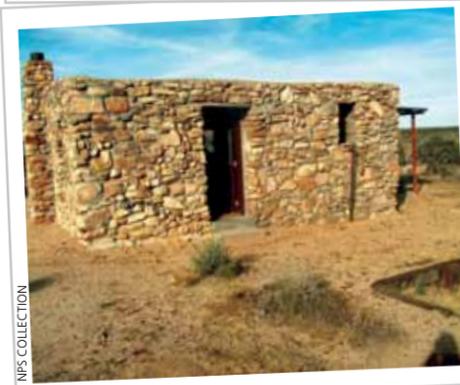
Chris Mills, Park Ranger

IF YOU WERE WONDERING HOW ANY-ONE could—or would want to!—live in the remote desert that is now Mojave National Preserve, take a leisurely stroll along our newest park trail, the Rock Spring Loop, to find some answers. The trail starts at the Rock House, five miles east of Black Canyon Road on Cedar Canyon Road. At the Rock House, you will find a vault toilet and picnic table.

The Rock House was constructed by Bert Smith in 1929, when he came to this area to recover from poison gas exposure suffered during World War I. Doctors told him he didn't have long to live, but the dry desert air proved so beneficial to Smith's health that he lived here for 25 more years! The second long-term resident was artist Carl Faber, who lived and worked at the Rock House in the 1980s, selling his artwork to passing travelers.

A few minutes into the hike, the remains of a milling operation from the 1930s are visible near the trail. Rich mineral deposits of gold, silver, copper, and other precious metals have been found across this region. Rock from nearby Watson Wash was hauled here and crushed to release the copper. The project met with little success and didn't last long. Prospectors often just walked away from such sites, leaving everything behind.

The trail continues to Rock Spring, one in a series of springs that dot the Mojave Desert every 20 to 30 miles, forming a natural travel corridor. This route eventually became known as the Mojave Trail and later, the Mojave Road. Water means life in the desert, so humans and wildlife depended on this spring, as did the livestock later introduced by miners and ranchers.



Above: Rock Spring. Below: the Rock House.

Getting There: Rock Spring Loop Trail

Five miles east of the intersection with Black Canyon Road (or 10 miles west of the intersection with Lanfair Road) on the unpaved but graded Cedar Canyon Road, a signed turn-off leads south to the trailhead and parking area.

Exhibits near the spring describe the Mojave and Chemehuevi Indians who formerly lived in the area, and Camp Rock Spring, an army outpost active briefly in the 1860s to protect mail and early travelers that passed along the route. Water is almost always present here; whether it's a slow trickle or several deep pools depends on recent rainfall.

From the spring, the trail climbs a ridgeline overlooking Watson Wash with expansive views of the Hackberry and New York Mountains to the north and east. If you look carefully, you can also see portions of the Mojave Road, now a popular four-wheel drive-route. This section runs parallel to Cedar Canyon Road. Leaving the ridgeline, you enter a small copse of juniper and pinyon trees that provide welcome shade as the trail leads you back to the Rock House.

As you walk back to your car, think about why you decided to hike this particular trail. Was it because of the spring? The presence of water has always attracted humans and wildlife, especially in arid regions like the Mojave Desert. Still, people have many less obvious reasons for journeying to this area that are known only to them.

Essential Information

Dates and Hours of Operation

The preserve is always open. Information centers (see below) maintain regular hours of operation.

Fees and Reservations

There are currently no entrance fees for Mojave National Preserve. See page 6 for information on campground reservations and fees.

Information Centers

Three information centers provide orientation, information, and trip-planning advice. Park rangers are on duty. Western National Parks Association (WNPA) bookstores offer books, maps, and other Mojave-related items.

Kelso Depot Visitor Center and the Beanery or lunchcounter

Located 34 miles south of Baker, Calif. on Kelbaker Road. Open daily, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center

Located near Hole-in-the-Wall Campground. Winter hours (October–April): Wednesday through Sunday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Summer hours (May–September) Open intermittently as staff is available.

Headquarters Information Center

Located at 2701 Barstow Road, Barstow, Calif. Open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Permits

Permits are required for all organized events, group events (more than 15 individuals or 7 vehicles), and commercial activities such as filming. Fees apply. Proof of insurance and posting of a bond might also be required. Call 760-252-6107 or visit www.nps.gov/moja for more information.

Lodging

There are no motels within Mojave National Preserve. Lodging may be available in Barstow, Nipton, Ludlow, Needles, Baker and Twentynine Palms, Calif., and in Primm and Searchlight, Nev.

Water

Drinking water is available only at Kelso Depot Visitor Center, Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center, Hole-in-the-Wall and Black Canyon Campgrounds, Mid-Hills Campground.

Gasoline

There are no gasoline stations within Mojave National Preserve—be sure to fill your tank before entering. Gasoline can be purchased along I-40 at Needles, Fenner and Ludlow, Calif., along I-15 at Baker, Calif., the Cima Road exit, and Primm, Nev., and along U.S. 95 at Searchlight, at the Nev. 163 junction south of Cal-Nev-Ari, Nev.

Pets

Though not allowed inside information centers, pets are welcome elsewhere in the preserve. They

must be confined to a leash no longer than six feet in length and never left unattended (including inside vehicles). Dogs used during hunting activities must be under the owner's control at all times. Pet excrement must be collected and disposed of in garbage receptacles.

Hunting and Firearms

Hunting is permitted in accordance with state regulations. All hunting activities require a license; additional permits and tags may apply. Visit the California Department of Fish & Game website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/> for more information.

Target shooting or "plinking" is prohibited. All firearms transported within the preserve must be unloaded, cased, and broken down, except during lawful hunting activities. No shooting is permitted within ½ mile of campgrounds, information centers, Kelso Dunes, and Fort Piute.

Collecting and Vandalism

Disturbing, defacing, or collecting plants, animals, rocks, historic or archeological objects is prohibited. Please leave these resources—all part of our national heritage—as you find them for everyone to enjoy. Metal detectors are not allowed.

Private Property

Private inholdings are found throughout the preserve. Please respect the rights of our neighbors. It is your responsibility to obtain permission before hunting, hiking, or entering private property.

Cattle and Fences

Most grazing within Mojave National Preserve occurs on public land. This land is open to you to explore, but please don't disturb cattle, fences, or water tanks. Leave gates as you find them.

Bicycles

Bicycles are allowed on dirt and paved roads, but are not allowed on hiking trails unless they are former roads. Bicycles are not allowed in Wilderness Areas or for cross-country travel.

Firewood & Campfires

Wood is scarce in the desert. Cutting or collecting any wood, including downed wood, is prohibited. All firewood, including kindling, must be brought in. Firewood may be available for purchase in Fenner, California. Campfires are allowed in fire rings in campgrounds and other established sites. To minimize your impact, use a firepan and pack out the ashes. Please do not leave fires smoldering or unattended.

Exploring Mojave

Scenic Cima Road connects I-15 with Cima, Calif., traversing the world's largest concentration of Joshua trees.

Avenues to Adventure

Mojave National Preserve is vast. At 1.6 million acres, it is the third largest unit of the National Park System in the contiguous United States. While much of Mojave's wild and historic splendor is available only to those who travel its trails and unmaintained roads, the primary roads of the preserve offer endless opportunities for exploration (see map on page 8).

Kelbaker Road

A 56-mile paved road stretching from I-15 at Baker, Calif. in the north to I-40 east of Ludlow, Calif. in the south, Kelbaker Road winds past cinder cones, lava flows, Kelso Depot, Kelso Dunes, and the Granite Mountains.

Cinder Cones & Lava Flows

No signs or services.

About 14 miles southeast of Baker, Kelbaker Road traverses a 25,600-acre area of lava flows and volcanic cinder cones thought to range in age from 10,000 to 7 million years old. In 1973, the area was designated as Cinder Cones National Natural Landmark due to its scenic beauty and exceptional geological value. Aiken Mine Road (19 miles southeast of Baker, Calif.) offers an interesting side trip through the heart of the area and access to a lava tube. **High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.**

Kelso Depot Visitor Center

Information, exhibits, orientation film, art gallery, bookstore, restrooms, water, picnic area. Located 34 miles southeast of Baker, Kelso Depot began operation in 1924 and served as train station, restaurant, and employee housing on the Los Angeles and Salt Lake route of the Union Pacific Railroad. Now Mojave National Preserve's principal information center and museum, extensive exhibits describe the cultural and natural history of the preserve. Historically furnished rooms offer a glimpse into Kelso's past.

Kelso Dunes

Self-guiding trail, vault toilets, no water. About 42 miles southeast of Baker (8 miles south of Kelso Depot), then 3 miles west on a graded dirt road, Kelso Dunes were created by winds carrying sand grains from the dried Soda Lake and Mojave River Sink located to the northwest. The Providence and Granite mountains served as barriers that trapped the blowing sand. Created over the course of 25,000 years, the dunes are nearly 700 feet high and cover a 45-square-mile area. The Kelso Dunes produce a "booming" or "singing" sound when sand with the right moisture content slides down the steep slopes. Try it for yourself—run down a dune slope (but don't trample vegetation!) to initiate the sound.

Granite Mountains

No signs or services. An imposing jumble of granite marks the south entrance to the preserve, 50 miles southeast of Baker on Kelbaker Road. Portions of the Granite Mountains lie within the University of California's Desert Research Center; please respect the signs that mark the boundary. **High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.**

Clark Mountain

No signs or services. The only portion of Mojave National Preserve north of I-15, Clark Mountain is also its highest point, at 7,929 feet. A relict white fir grove near the top is one of only three in the Mojave Desert. Check detailed maps or ask a ranger for access information. **High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.**

Cima Road

About 26 miles east of Baker, Calif., the paved Cima Road connects I-15 with Cima, Calif., 16 miles to the southeast.

Cima Dome & Joshua Tree Forest

Self-guiding trail, no water.

The near-perfect symmetry of Cima Dome rises 1,500 feet above the surrounding desert and provides ideal habitat for the world's largest concentration of Joshua trees. Although the top of the dome is located west of Cima Road near the Teutonia Peak Trailhead, this unusual geologic feature is best seen from a distance. Try the view looking northwest from Cedar Canyon Road, 2.5 miles east of Kelso Cima Road.

Cedar Canyon & Black Canyon Roads

Mostly unpaved, the 20-mile Cedar Canyon Road connects Kelso Cima Road in the west with Ivanpah Road in the east, paralleling (and sometimes joining) the historic Mojave Road. Black Canyon Road (unpaved north of Hole-in-the-Wall) connects Cedar Canyon Road with Essex Road, 20 miles to the south.

Rock Spring

Wayside exhibits, vault toilet, picnic table A well-known waterhole for early travelers, Rock Spring is located 5.2 miles east of Black Canyon Road on Cedar Canyon Road, then ¼ mile south on a sandy, unmarked road (**four-wheel drive recommended**). Camp Rock Springs, a military redoubt established in 1866, was one of the most isolated and comfortless army posts in the West.

Mid Hills

Campground, trailhead, vault toilets, water. Not recommended for RVs. About 2 miles west of Black Canyon Road at the north end of Wild Horse Canyon Road, Mid Hills supports pinyon-juniper woodland habitat. The effects of a fire that swept through the area in June 2005 are evident, although several campsites in the popular campground still contain shady stands of pinyon pine and juniper.

Hole-in-the-Wall

Information center, bookstore, campgrounds, picnic area, trailhead, restroom, water, telephone. Just north of the junction of Black Canyon and the south end of Wild Horse Canyon Roads, rhyolite cliffs riddled with holes and hollows are the backdrop for Hole-in-the-Wall.

Piute Spring

About 7.4 miles west of U.S. 95 on the unmarked and unpaved Mojave Road, then 3.1 miles west on an extremely rough unmarked dirt road. **High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.**

Fort Piute and Piute Spring

Trails, wayside exhibits, no signs or services. Willows, cottonwoods, and rushes thrive along a half-mile section of Piute Creek. Fort Piute (still visible) was one in a string of military outposts built along the Mojave Road. Please don't climb on the foundations or remove anything.

Dirt Road Driving

Prepare Your Vehicle

Ensure that your vehicle is in good condition: check tires, oil, and gas gauge.

For emergencies, carry tools, tire jack, towrope, extra water, and fluids for your vehicle.

Know the Rules of the Road

All vehicles operating within Mojave National Preserve must be street-legal in accordance with California DMV requirements, including current registration and tags, lights and turn signals, and valid insurance. California "Green Sticker" and "Red Sticker" programs are not recognized within the preserve.

Off-pavement travel is allowed only on existing, open dirt roads. Do not travel cross-country or create new routes. This rule is strictly enforced; violators will receive citations. Driving in washes is not permitted. Watch for and respect Wilderness Boundary signs; motorized vehicles and bicycles are not allowed in designated Wilderness Areas.

Check Road Conditions

Road conditions vary widely. Dirt roads might be rough, sandy, or muddy, rendering them impassable and the unprepared motorist could be trapped many miles from help. Watch for cattle, burros, and other wildlife on roadways.

Not all roads are shown on all maps; traces and illegal shortcuts add to the confusion. Carry a good map, and ask a park ranger for current road conditions.

Zzyzx Road

Six miles southwest of Baker on I-15, Zzyzx Road leads 5 miles south into the preserve along the western shore of Soda Lake (dry).

Zzyzx/Soda Springs

Self-guiding trail, wayside exhibits, vault toilets, non-potable water, picnic area. Historically known as Soda Springs and later renamed Zzyzx (pronounced Zye-zix), this oasis is home to the California State University Desert Studies Center. The buildings and pond were developed in the 1940s by Curtis Springer, who operated a health resort at the site. Zzyzx is open to the public—stroll around Lake Tuendae and along the shore of Soda Dry Lake. Please do not disturb participants when classes are in session.

Nipton, Ivanpah & Lanfair Roads

Eleven miles south of Primm, Nev., Nipton Road begins at I-15 and passes through Nipton, Calif., 11 miles east. Ivanpah Road (only the 10 northernmost miles paved) heads southeast of Nipton Road, through the Ivanpah and Lanfair valleys, eventually connecting with the paved Lanfair Road and the Fenner Valley. Together stretching 46 miles, Ivanpah and Lanfair Roads connect the northern preserve boundary (bordering Nipton Road) with the southern near Goffs, Calif.

Hotel Nipton

Privately-operated hotel, store, & campground; for info. call 760 856-2335 or email at stay@nipton.com. Built in 1910, this charming hotel reflects the railroad, ranching, and mining history of the small community at Nipton.

Caruthers Canyon

Primitive camping, hiking, no signs or services. About 5.5 miles west of Ivanpah Road on New York Mountains Road, then 2.7 miles north on an unsigned road, Caruthers Canyon is located in the rugged New York Mountains. Surrounded by mountains rising over 7,500 feet, a botanical "island" of chaparral plants remains from wetter times of the past. **High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.**

Sand & Mud Driving Tips

- Be sure to carry plenty of drinking water and emergency supplies.
- Engage four-wheel drive before entering deep sand or mud.
- Don't gun the engine—this will spin the tires, dig you in deeper, and could bury your vehicle to the frame. Smooth, easy power is better than too much power; use low gearing and just enough throttle to maintain forward movement.
- If you detect a loss of traction, turn the steering wheel rapidly from side-to-side—this might help to generate traction.
- If your vehicle gets stuck, place solid materials (such as floor mats) under the tires to provide traction.
- If you're really stuck, it's best to stay with your vehicle. A stationary, stranded vehicle is much easier to locate than a person traveling on foot. Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day; stay in the shade of your vehicle.

Lanfair Valley

No signs or services. South of the New York Mountains along Ivanpah and Lanfair roads, this high valley shelters an impressive Joshua tree forest and was an early ranching and homesteading center. From 1893 until 1923, the Nevada Southern Railway ran up the valley from Goffs, providing services to homesteaders and ranchers in the valley and to miners in the mountains beyond. While little evidence remains of homesteads that once dotted the valley, tracts of private property still exist. Please respect the rights of landowners.

Looking Back

Books and More!

Phillip Gomez, Park Ranger

Western National Parks Association (WNPA) is one of at least 64 associations that work in partnership with the National Park Service to support park programs and to assist park visitors in making connections with the special places they come to experience.

Since 1936, Congress has recognized cooperating associations for supporting the Park Service in its educational and preservation goals, accomplished through bookstore sales, membership support, book and publication development, research funding, and special events.

WNPA donates a percentage of the revenues gained from sales; more than \$4 million annually to 66 park affiliates. The association also operates an online store, at www.wnpa.org with more than 600 educational and inspirational products and publications that make park visits more meaningful and memorable.

The association has, as one of its founding goals, the publication of park-related information not readily available elsewhere.

Currently, more than 175 books have been published and kept in print, with many new publications introduced annually. Since its founding, WNPA has contributed \$55 million to the parks.

Stop by the WNPA bookstores at Kelso and the Hole-in-the Wall Visitor Centers and check out the wide array of books on geology, history, and ecology as well as other items available for purchase. Your purchases help parks by generating revenue for interpretative programs, educational outreach, and park research.



Julia Cronk, Western National Parks Association Bookstore Manager, at the Kelso Depot.



Top left: Mrs. Hayden teacher, and Mrs. Warner, bus driver stand by the Kelso schoolbus. Adjacent: Renovated exterior and interior of Kelso's school.

Kelso's Schoolhouse: Then and Now

Phillip Gomez, Park Ranger

FOR THREE YEARS GLENN DEVOGE'S FATHER, 86, ALSO named Glenn, went to school at the "one-room" Kelso schoolhouse along the north side of Kelso-Cima Road, half a mile from the Kelso Depot Visitor Center.

That was during the Great Depression. He lived in a boarding house on the north side of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and would ride a horse to school, his son said during a recent visit to the depot. Tiny Kelso, then and now, is a company town, owned by the Union Pacific Railroad—the corporate behemoth born during the Civil War with the word "Union" reflecting half its birth certificate.

For the past year or so, the National Park Service has been restoring the Kelso schoolhouse, which was shuttered a half-century ago. But instead of school kids getting an education, park visitors will learn about what it was like to attend school on this 20th-century frontier in the Mojave Desert.

The Park Service financed the \$247,000 restoration project from special project funding for maintaining historic structures said Linda Slater, Chief, Resource Interpretation. "Our goal is to staff the building with a park volunteer and allow people inside," Slater said. She indicated that visiting school groups may soon get their "lessons" in the old schoolhouse taught by "living history" rangers presenting special programs.

However, the schoolhouse interior needs to be decorated and furnished appropriately to make it authentic. Before opening it on a permanent basis, the National Park Service will prepare a historic furnishings plan detailing how the schoolhouse would have looked during the 1940s when the population of Kelso was at its peak. In the meantime, park staff will allow access to the schoolhouse as circumstances afford.

Other old ruined buildings seen along Kelso-Cima Road are located on private property and are ineligible for restoration using public funds. The schoolhouse is the exception; it's publicly owned, part of the preserve, and part of Kelso's humble story connecting the community to the more grandiose Spanish Revival-style train depot.

President Abraham Lincoln, whose picture hung in many a classroom, spoke in the First Inaugural Address of the "mystic chords of memory" that united long-passed Americans with present generations. At places like Kelso, those chords are still strong, hardly frayed at all. Glenn DeVoge's grandfather worked as the foreman of the Walking Box Ranch near Searchlight before running a general store on Kelso's south side, where most residents live today. DeVoge's father, after his schooling at Kelso, worked for the U.P. for 42 years, though not on the Kelso-Yermo line. Glenn DeVoge Jr. used to sleep in one of the upstairs rooms at the depot "clubhouse," as it was then called, and took his meals at the Beanery. That was in the early 1980s, shortly before the restaurant closed for business in 1985.

Still working as a conductor on U.P. freight trains, DeVoge recently stepped off a train briefly stopped at the depot to come inside and show a co-worker around his old haunts. Just as DeVoge Jr's father once plodded to school on his horse and his grandfather swept the dust from his store, "living history" still haunts this desert oasis.



COURTESY/HOLLIS T. FRANCOM

Above: 1933 class photo, Kelso Schoolhouse; Glenn DeVoge Sr. stands behind girl (chin hidden by her head) in the next to last row, far right. His brother is in the front row, second from left.



NPS COLLECTION

Entrance to Kelso's renovated schoolhouse

New Books on History

Phillip Gomez, Park Ranger

THE BOOKSTORE IN THE KELSO DEPOT Visitor Center has added two new titles focusing on the transcontinental railroads—the nation's first rails systems to traverse the West from the Great Plains to the Pacific Coast. Connecting rail links with eastern seaboard cities made these railways truly "transcontinental."

Mojave National Preserve encompasses sandy, rugged terrain bisected by the Union Pacific and traversed along its southern boundary by the Burlington Northern-Santa

Fe (BNSF), the successor railroad to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. Historian and attorney Walter R. Borneman presents a dazzling account of how the western railroads got built in the aftermath of the Civil War. With the linkage of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific at Promontory Summit, Utah, in 1869, other railroads began engineering routes and laying a network of rails across the West. (The National Park Service commemorates the meeting of the two initial railroads at Golden Spike National Historic Site in north-central Utah.)

But Borneman pays particular attention to the ancestors of the red and yellow diesels seen today alongside old Route 66. Beginning in the 1850s as a small railroad in the Kansas Territory called the Leavenworth Pawnee & Western, it emerged toward the end of the 19th

century as the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe. Its rails then linked Lake Superior with the Gulf of Mexico and the Missouri River with the West Coast. The southern route from Chicago to Los Angeles was the most famous route, passing as it did through the heart of the scenic Southwest, including the Mojave Desert. This route became, in Borneman's words, "the most significant of the nation's transcontinental railroads."

The "race" in the book's title was the rivalry among capitalists to be first to build across the desert Southwest on the most direct, most snow-free line, with tracks over the easiest grades to tidewater on the Pacific Coast.

Continued on next page...

Nature and Science



Above: Bighorn sheep find reprieve from the heat under a desert shrub. Center: A tarantula in a defensive posture.

Youth Quail Hunt

Rana Knighten, Park Ranger

Hunting has long been part of the American culture and heritage. Mojave National Preserve is one of 69 national parklands in which hunting is permitted. In an effort to connect youth and families to their public lands, Mojave National Preserve, in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Game Commission, Safari Club International, and others, is hosting the second annual Youth Quail and Chukar Hunt. Last year, seventeen young hunters bagged a total of two chukar and twenty-four Gambel's quail.

The event is open to anyone 18 and younger who has successfully completed a hunter safety class and has the necessary licenses. An experienced hunter will act as a mentor and guide while young people pursue these elusive game birds. Participants will enjoy talks on the Mojave Desert, as well as lessons on gun, and backcountry safety. Experienced sportsmen will talk about Mojave game birds, proper field and dressing techniques, and hunting and wilderness ethics. Parents are encouraged to attend, but cannot hunt.

This year's youth hunt will be held October 29 through October 30 at the Black Canyon Group and Equestrian Campground. Breakfast and dinner will be provided on Saturday. The event is limited to the first 25 participants who register. Late registrants will be placed on a waiting list. For more information or to register, contact Neal Darby, wildlife biologist for Mojave National Preserve at (760) 252-6146.

New Books on History

(continued from page 4)

"The author does a wonderful job bringing to life the personalities of the larger-than-life men who led the rails west," said one reviewer, "Great, readable history."

Half a century before Howard Johnson forged a franchised chain of quality restaurants along the East Coast in the early 1930s, Fred Harvey was the household name in food service and lodging across the Southwest. But Harvey's vast organization of "eating houses" and lodges was laid out before the advent of our car culture; the Fred Harvey Company contracted with the Santa Fe Railroad to provide rail passengers with its trademark customer service. "Harvey Girls" in black and white waitress garb served train passengers elegant meals with English silverware and fine Irish linens; Harvey and his son Ford created a hospitality empire—the first national chain of lunchrooms, hotels, gift and curio shops—before McDonald's, Marriott hotels, Starbucks, and Hallmark came onto the scene. Grand hotels, such as the Alvarado in Albuquerque and the El Tovar at the Grand Canyon, inspired Spanish colonial, Mission-Revival and Pueblo Indian

Beware: The Male Tarantulas are Coming!

Neal Darby, Wildlife Biologist

STARTING EVERY SEPTEMBER, the tarantulas crawl out of holes and crevasses scattered across the desert floor. They come out in force, just in time to add to your Halloween fright. They crawl across the Mojave searching for one thing. Nothing impedes their search. On mountains and across valleys they search for fresh blood . . . well, actually, they search for female tarantulas.

Biologists recognize more than 800 different species of tarantulas worldwide. They are found everywhere except the Arctic and Antarctica. As the world's largest spiders, some species grow over a foot long. Local Mojave tarantulas rarely get much larger than five inches. Their large size, large pincers or fangs, intimidating defense posture, and the fact that they are hairy has made them staples in Halloween horrors and nightmares. In reality, tarantulas are very docile and are even kept as pets.

Like most animals, however, they will defend themselves by biting, and the bites can leave a painful wound, much like a bee sting. North American species are famous for throwing ultricating, or stinging hairs, found on the tarantula's abdomen.

When threatened, the tarantula breaks the hairs from its body and kicks them towards the threat. It is even more painful if the hairs embed in the eyes or mucous membranes of the mouth and nose. The reaction to the stinging hairs depends on your sensitivity. Tarantulas are venomous, but not deadly.



PHOTO: GEORGE LAUTERBACH

Throughout the world, there has never been a confirmed human fatality from a tarantula bite or from contact with stinging hairs. Hydrocortisone cream can help relieve symptoms from an encounter with a tarantula.

You'll rarely see tarantulas in the wild, as they spend almost all their time in burrows. At night they sit at burrow entrances or wander short distances to ambush insects, spiders, and other prey. In the fall, however, the male tarantulas come out at all hours in search of females. After mating with females, male tarantulas need to leave quickly, or possibly get devoured by the mother of their babies!

The threat of being eaten by their female mate and their constant wandering equates to a short life for male tarantulas. Seven years is considered old for a male tarantula in the wild. The females, however, can live up to 35 years and longer.

Under the appropriate conditions, these arachnids that make an appearance in the fall can, sometimes, come out en masse, numbering in the thousands. Even in the lean ye-

ars, the odds are good that you will spot a male tarantula from September through November along the preserve roads.

Unfortunately, roads and tarantulas don't mix. Hundreds of tarantulas are killed every year by motorists, making it more difficult for the biologists to protect and conserve them. There are no easy solutions, but slowing down below posted speed limits and avoiding driving over objects in the road can give male tarantulas and other wildlife a better chance of not getting struck by a vehicle. Male tarantulas and other wildlife can't always adapt to human activities. Give'em a brake!

FEATURE CREATURE



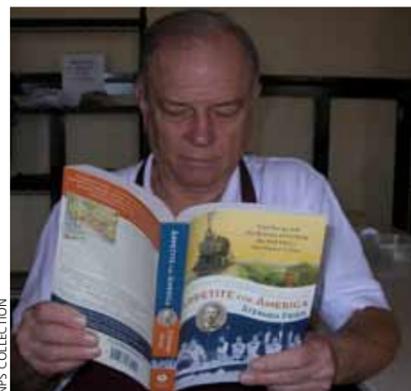
COURTESY/TIM HENSEN

A blister beetle munches on wild heliotrope.

styles of architecture for many public buildings sporting a Southwestern "look." El Tovar became the model for the style known as National Park Rustic; the Spanish Mission Revival style was imitated by the Union Pacific Railroad in the design of California and Nevada train depots, including Kelso's, in the 1920s. These cultural fashions, gleaned from Santa Fe, N.M., added immeasurably to the prestige of the Santa Fe Railroad and the popularity of Native American art.

Author Stephen Fried tells Fred Harvey's story as it intersects with socio-economic, technological, and political developments in the nation, from the Battle of the Little Big horn in distant Montana to the arrival of autos, telephones radio, two depressions, and television.

"If you like history and are looking for something unusual and uplifting to read," one reviewer wrote, "I highly recommend 'Appetite for America.' You will see westward expansion in a whole new light."



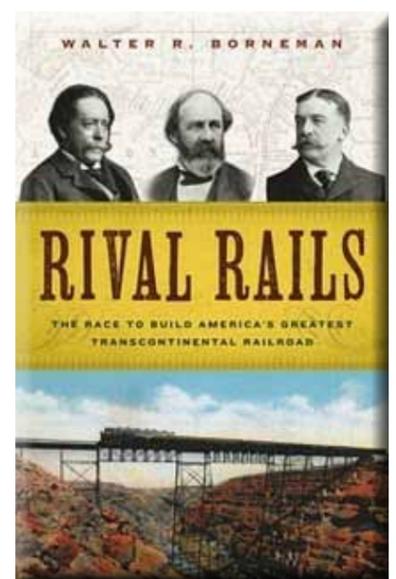
NPS COLLECTION

Mike Williams, manager of the Kelso Beanery, reads *Appetite for America*. The Union Pacific, which built the Kelso Depot in 1924, was in fierce competition with Santa Fe's Harvey Houses.

Read all about it!

Rival Rails: The Race to Build America's Greatest Transcontinental Railroad by Walter R Borneman
Hardcover at \$28.00

Appetite for America: Fred Harvey and the Business of Civilizing the Wild West by Stephen Fried
Paperback at \$18.00





NPS COLLECTION

Camping & Backcountry Travel

Roadside camping and hiking opportunities abound at the 1.6 million acre Mojave National Preserve. If you visit in the spring, you may see Joshua trees in bloom.

Backcountry Guidelines & Regulations

Backcountry camping—backpacking, roadside camping, and horsepacking—requires careful planning in order to ensure a safe and rewarding experience. Visitors should adhere to National Park Service regulations and are further encouraged to follow Leave No Trace guidelines to minimize their impact on the fragile desert environment.

Leave No Trace information is rooted in scientific studies and common sense. The message is framed under seven Leave No Trace Principles presented below with accompanying regulations and guidelines specific to Mojave National Preserve:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

- There is no permit or registration system for backcountry camping at Mojave National Preserve; be sure to notify others of your travel itinerary.
- Few established trails exist; carry a good map and familiarize yourself with desert travel and survival skills before beginning your trip.

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Reuse existing campsites (required for roadside camping—see below).
- Do not make camp in a dry wash—flash floods develop quickly in the desert.
- Camping is limited to a maximum of 14 consecutive days per visit/stay and 30 total days per year.
- Campsites must be more than 200 yards from any water source.
- Camping is not permitted: within 1/4 mile of any paved road; within 1/2 mile of Fort Piute or Kelso Depot; within 1 mile north (i.e., the crest of the dunes) or 1/4 mile south of the Kelso Dunes access road.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly

- Store all food and garbage in a manner that will prevent access by wildlife. Carry plastic bags and pack out all trash.
- Bury human waste in catholes 6-8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Pack out all toilet paper and hygiene products.

4. Leave What You Find

- Disturbing, defacing, or collecting plants, animals, rocks, and historic or archeological objects is prohibited. As part of our national heritage, these resources should be left as they are found for all to enjoy. Metal detectors are not allowed.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires are allowed in established fire rings only, or with use of a portable firepan (be sure to pack out ashes). Do not leave fires smoldering or unattended.
- Cutting or collecting any wood, including downed wood, is prohibited. All firewood must be brought into the preserve.

6. Respect Wildlife

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

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Campgrounds

Hole-in-the-Wall Campground

Facilities: vault toilets, trash receptacles, potable water, fire rings, picnic tables, dump station; no utility hookups.

Fees: \$12 per site per night, \$6 for America the Beautiful Senior/Access Pass holders.

Reservations: not accepted; campsites available on a first-come, first-served basis.

At 4,400 feet in elevation, Hole-in-the-Wall Campground is surrounded by sculptured volcanic rock walls and makes a great basecamp for hikers (see p.7) and for exploring nearby Mitchell Caverns in the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area. Thirty-five campsites accommodate RVs and tents; two walk-in sites are also available.

Mid Hills Campground

Facilities: vault toilets, trash receptacles, potable water, fire rings, picnic tables; no dump station or utility hookups.

Fees: \$12 per site per night, \$6 for America the Beautiful Senior/Access Pass holders.

Reservations: not accepted; campsites available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Hackberry Fire swept through the Mid Hills area in June 2005, burning much of the vegetation. About half of the 26 campsites were left unharmed, however—they remain surrounded by pinyon pine and juniper trees. At 5,600 feet in elevation, Mid Hills is much cooler than the desert floor below. The access road is unpaved and is not recommended for motorhomes or trailers.

Black Canyon Equestrian & Group Campground

Facilities: corrals, vault toilets, trash receptacles, potable water, fire ring, grill, picnic shelter with tables.

Fees: \$25 per group per night.

Reservations: required; call 760 928-2572 or 760 252-6104

Located across the road from Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center. Horses and riders are welcome at Mojave National Preserve! Permits required for large groups (see p.2 for permit information).

Nearby Camping Areas

Afton Canyon

25 miles southwest of Baker on I-15, has a BLM campground with tables and fire rings for \$6 per night.

Commercial camping is also available at Baker, Barstow, Needles, and Nipton, Calif.

Roadside Camping

Roadside vehicle camping is permitted in areas that have been traditionally used for this purpose. Camping tramples vegetation and disturbs soils. By reusing existing sites, you help protect the desert from further damage. Many roadside camping sites cannot accommodate multiple vehicles; please don't enlarge sites. Do not camp along paved roads or in day-use areas, and stay at least 200 yards from all water sources.

The National Park Service encourages roadside campers to use the following, selected sites:

Near Kelbaker Road:

Rainy Day Mine Site

15.2 miles southeast of Baker on Kelbaker Road, then 0.3 miles northeast on the unsigned and very sandy road to the Rainy Day Mine. Four-wheel drive recommended; no RVs.

Granite Pass

6.1 miles north of I-40 on Kelbaker Road, just north of Granite Pass, then west on one of several access roads. Campsites are located just north of the granite spires. High clearance vehicle recommended; no RVs.

Kelso Dunes Mine

4 miles west of Kelbaker Road on the unpaved Kelso Dunes Road. One campsite is located south of the road, 1/4 mile past the marked trailhead. Several others are available 3/4 mile beyond, near a clump of trees. Except at these sites, roadside camping is prohibited along Kelso Dunes Road (including at the trailhead).



Near Cima Road:

Sunrise Rock

12 miles south of I-15 on the east side of Cima Road. Trailhead for Teutonia Peak Trail is nearby on the opposite side of Cima Road.

Near Black Canyon Road:

Black Canyon Road

5.2 miles south of Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center on the east side of Black Canyon Road, near rock piles.

Near Ivanpah and Cedar Canyon Roads:

Caruthers Canyon

5.5 miles west of Ivanpah Road on New York Mountains Road, then 1.5 to 2.7 miles north to campsites. High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended; no RVs.



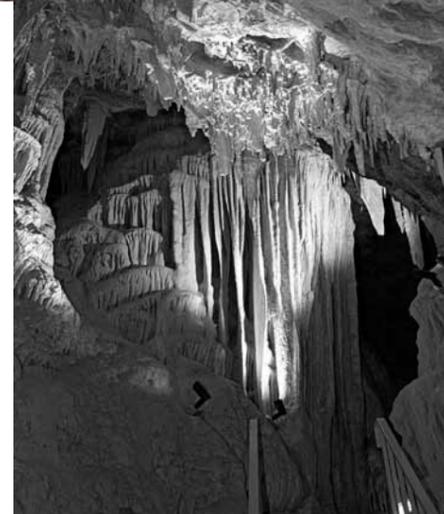
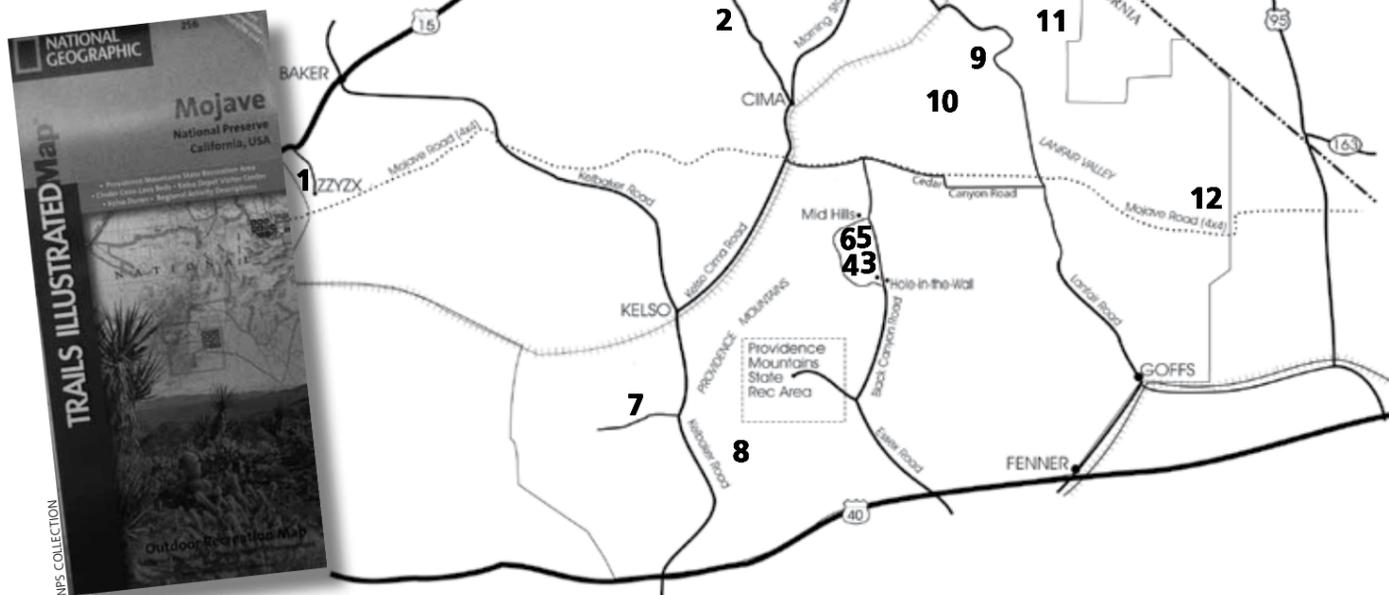
Hiking



Hikers at Mojave National Preserve can enjoy a variety of challenges, with sweeping views, solitude, and nearly 800,000 acres of designated Wilderness.

Although there are few established hiking trails in Mojave National Preserve, abandoned dirt roads, washes, and ridge lines offer an abundance of cross-country hiking opportunities. Numbers on map show general locations of trails and routes listed below.

All trails and routes listed below are shown on the National Geographic Trails Illustrated topographic map for Mojave National Preserve. This and other maps are available for purchase at the Kelso Depot Visitor Center and the Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center.



Mitchell Caverns remains closed indefinitely

Linda Slater, Chief,
Resource Interpretation

Visitors to Mojave's Hole-in-the-Wall Campground often include a tour of Mitchell Caverns as part of their activities....but no more. State budget problems have forced the shutdown of this beloved desert attraction.

Providence Mountains State Recreation Area, home to Mitchell Caverns, is a California State Park located within the boundaries of Mojave National Preserve. State park officials shut down operations in January 2011. State officials decided to close the park when employee retirements coincided with problems in the functioning of the water system.

Meanwhile, shortfalls in the California state budget caused lawmakers in Sacramento to ask that state agencies identify possible budget cuts. In May 2011, California State Parks released its closure list, and Providence Mountains was among the 70 parks included. Although closures for most parks on the list won't go into effect until July 2012, California State Parks' officials decided not to invest in repairs to the park's infrastructure during a time of shrinking budgets, so Providence Mountains State Recreation Area remains closed.

Mitchell Caverns was initially developed as a privately operated tourist attraction by Jack and Ida Mitchell in the early 1930s. Jack Mitchell died in 1954, and his family turned the property over to the state. Two years later, in 1956 it was added to the California State Park system.

Over the years, California State Parks has made many improvements to the caverns, including the development of a safe pathway through the caverns, a tunnel connecting the two principal caves, and installation of a lighting system. However, the caverns' remote location and lack of connection to the electrical grid have contributed to the difficulties in its operation and maintenance. With continuing weakness in the economy and ongoing fiscal issues for California State Parks, the future of Mitchell Caverns remains uncertain.

Developed Trails

1) Lake Tuendae Nature Trail

Trailhead: Zzyzx parking area, 5 miles south of I-15 on Zzyzx Road.

Enjoy an easy, self-guided, ¼-mile stroll around Lake Tuendae. Wayside exhibits along the trail reveal the rich cultural and natural history of this oasis on the preserve's western boundary.

2) Teutonia Peak Trail

Trailhead: 12 miles south of I-15, or 5 miles north of Cima, Calif. on Cima Road.

Explore the world's densest Joshua tree forest en route to a rocky peak with expansive views of Cima Dome and beyond. 4 miles round-trip.

3) Hole-in-the-Wall Nature Trail

Trailhead: Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center and Campground, 20 miles north of I-40 on Essex and Black Canyon roads.

Learn to identify desert plants on this easy, ½-mile round-trip hike. Trailheads at Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center and Campground.

4) Rings Loop Trail

Trailhead: Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center parking area, 20 miles north of I-40 on Essex and Black Canyon roads.

Discover how Hole-in-the-Wall got its name as you ascend through narrow Banshee Canyon with the help of metal rings mounted in the rock. The 1½-mile round-trip hike connects to the Mid Hills to Hole-in-the-Wall Trail (see below).

5) Mid Hills to Hole-in-the-Wall Trail

Trailheads: Entrance to Mid Hills Campground, and about 1 mile west of Black Canyon Road on the south end of Wild Horse Canyon Road.

Hike 8 miles, one-way, through a maze of washes decorated with barrel and cholla cacti, then through the Hackberry Fire burned area. Total elevation gain is 1,200 feet. Watch carefully for trail route markers.

6) Barber Peak Loop Trail

Trailhead: Parking area for walk-in tent sites at Hole-in-the-Wall Campground.

The preserve's newest trail, this 6-mile loop encircles Barber Peak just west of Hole-in-the-Wall Campground, passes the Opalite Cliffs, and returns to Hole-in-the-Wall via Banshee Canyon.

Recommended Routes

Warning: the routes described below are not established trails; trailheads might be unidentifiable or nonexistent. Check a detailed map and consult a park ranger for route information. Maps and guidebooks are available at information centers.

7) Kelso Dunes

Start: 3 miles west of Kelbaker Road on the well-graded, but unpaved Kelso Dunes Road.

Hikers at sunrise and sunset are treated to both cooler temperatures and the rose-colored glow of the dunes. The roughly 3-mile round-trip hike might take several hours as you slog through the sand, then slide down the slopes.

8) Quail Basin

Start: 12.5 miles north of I-40 on Kelbaker Road, then 1 mile east on an unmarked dirt road. Park at junction with closed dirt road heading south. **High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.**

Follow the route to the south to a road that loops around a small valley. After walking the loop, return via the same route. The 6.5-mile round-trip route leads past jumbled rocks into a small valley of Mojave yucca and juniper surrounded by granite outcroppings.

9) Keystone Canyon

Start: 18 miles south of Nipton Road on Ivanpah Road, then 2.5 miles west on an unmarked

dirt road. Bear left at the first fork, right at the second, then continue to a parking area. **Four-wheel drive recommended.**

Hike the deteriorating closed road into Keystone Canyon, ascending the New York Mountains. Continue cross-country to the top of the ridge for spectacular views. Hike is 3 miles one-way.

10) Caruthers Canyon

Start: Primitive campsites in Caruthers Canyon, 5.5 miles west of Ivanpah Road on New York Mountains Road, then 2.7 miles north on unsigned road. **High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.**

Hike 3 miles one-way through a rocky basin to an abandoned gold-mining area. Do not enter mine shafts or climb on abandoned structures; they are unstable and extremely dangerous.

11) Castle Peaks Corridor

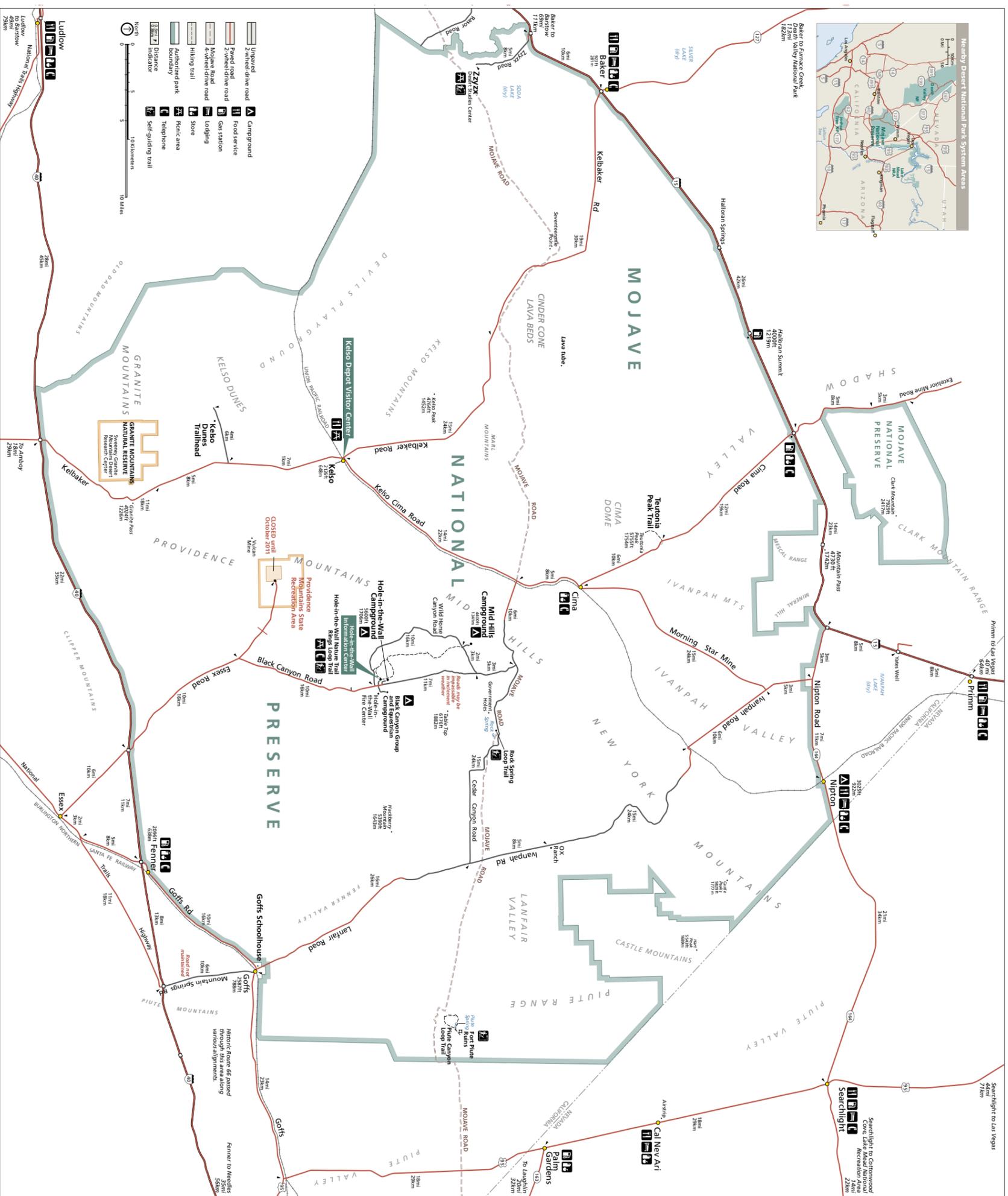
Start: 4.9 miles east of Ivanpah Road on signed Hart Mine Road; left at fork, then 0.9 miles, left at fork, then 3.4 miles, crossing an earthen berm; left at fork, then 1 mile more to where road ends. **High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.**

For excellent views of the Castle Peak spires, walk 4 miles one-way up the closed road to the ridgetop and beyond into a small canyon.

12) Piute Creek

Start: 9.5 miles east of the junction of Lanfair Valley and Cedar Canyon roads on a dirt utility road, then 0.5 miles north. **High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.**

Hike 6.5 miles round-trip through colorful Piute Gorge and explore the ruins of Fort Piute, built and manned in the 1860s to protect mail and travelers on the Mojave Road. A perennial stream near the fort, rare in the Mojave, supports riparian plants and animals. Return to your vehicle via an unused trace of the Mojave Road.



Telephone Directory
Emergency 911
Federal Interagency Communications Center 909 383-5651
San Bernardino County Sheriff - Baker 760 733-4448
San Bernardino County Sheriff - Needles 760 326-9200

Mojave National Preserve
Barstow Headquarters Office 760 252-6100
Kelso Depot Visitor Center 760 252-6108
Hole-in-the-Wall Fire Center 760 928-2573
Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center 760 252-6104 or 760 928-2572

Nearby Parklands
Anza Borrego Desert State Park 760 767-4205
Calico Ghost Town 760 254-2122
Death Valley National Park 760 786-2331
Joshua Tree National Park 760 367-5500
Lake Mead National Recreation Area 702 293-8990

National Park Service
Mojave National Preserve www.nps.gov/moja
Death Valley National Park www.nps.gov/ddeva
Joshua Tree National Park www.nps.gov/jotr
Lake Mead National Recreation Area www.nps.gov/lame
Western National Parks Association www.wnpa.org
Desert Studies Institute (Zzyzx) <http://biology.fullerton.edu/dscl/>
Bureau of Land Management [www.blm.gov](http://blm.gov)
Sweeney Granite Mtns. Desert Research Ctr. <http://nrs.ucop.edu/Sweeney-Granite.htm>
DesertUSA wildflower reports www.desertusa.com/wildflower/wildupdates
Desert Tortoise data and information www.deserttortoise.gov
Desert Discovery Center www.discoverytrails.org/welcome1.html
Wilderness Information www.wilderness.net
California Desert www.californiadesert.gov
Leave No Trace www.lnt.org
US Federal government jobs www.usajobs.opm.gov



WESTERN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION

