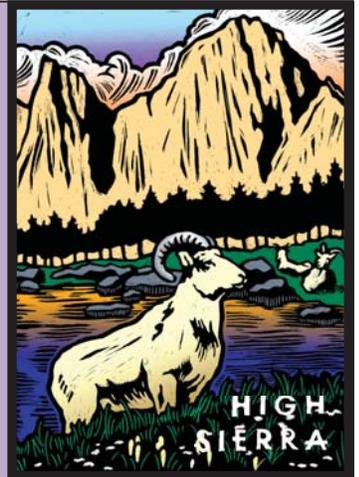


# Visitor Guide: Winter 2013 - 2014

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks & Sequoia National Forest/Giant Sequoia National Monument



## Wet & Wild or Dry & Mild?

**MOST WINTER STORMS** here blow in between November and April. The overall pattern, however, varies enormously. Some winters see heavy rain and snow while others stay mild and dry.

The wettest winters on record have been more than three times wetter than the driest. Waves of powerful storms blanket the parks with snow, usually from the sequoia groves on uphill. For many years, the Giant Forest grove held the nation's 24-hour snowfall record: A storm back in the 1930s dropped 60 inches in one day!

The result of a series of these storms? Snowpacks ten to twenty feet deep. During such winters, just getting to the Big Trees can be an adventure. Plow operators make a priority of keeping the two park entrance roads open to Grant Grove and Giant Forest, but during heavy storms they may have to go back and forth on one stretch all day. Tire chains are a constant. It is, however, a boon to skiers, snowshoers, and sledding enthusiasts.

During dry winters, on the other hand, long spells of quiet sunny weather dominate. Storms come in only occasionally and there may be little more than patchy snow on the trails.

Scientists who study weather have long worked to understand what controls central California's winter weather. In recent decades, they've made significant progress, with most attention going to the relationship between

ocean temperatures and the paths that storms take. It appears that when the Pacific Ocean off South America is at its warmest, the storm track in the northern Pacific brings wet weather to central and southern California. This is the "El Niño" effect meteorologists talk about.

How will this winter shape up? As you read this, the verdict may be more apparent. Enjoy your visit either way!



The old Giant Forest Village. Only the peak of what is now the Giant Forest Museum shows to the left.

### Check for details & new hours inside:

Activities: programs.....	5
Bears & food storage .....	11
Campgrounds .....	4
Exploring:	
Sequoia NP.....	6
Kings Canyon NP & USFS..	7
Facilities & hours .....	8-9
Lodging .....	5
Map of park roads .....	8
Nature & ecosystems .....	3
Phone numbers .....	2
Rules & regs: some basics....	9
Road information .....	12
Safety .....	10
Visitor centers .....	2
Wilderness camping & permits .....	11