

Review all safety advice on page 10. Carry a map and warm clothes. Orient yourself before heading out and tell someone where you are going.

Grant Grove

Grant Tree Trail is the only intermittently plowed trail. Beware of slippery ice! Once snow is deep, rent skis or snowshoes at Grant Grove Gift Shop. Buy a ski trail map and follow the colored markers on trees. Guided snowshoe walks may be offered on weekends.

Kings Canyon Visitor Center

Daily 9am-4:30pm (closed 12-1pm). Details, page 2.

General Grant Tree Trail

May be plowed in winter. General Grant, one of the world's largest living trees, stands along this 1/3-mile (.5 km) paved trail. A guide is sold at the visitor center. It is also a living national shrine. Northwest of the visitor center 1 mile (1.6 km).

Panoramic Point Road

Once snow flies this becomes a ski or snowshoe trail to a spectacular vista of the High Sierra. Park at Grant Village, go east through the visitor center parking lot, left around the meadow, then right at the sign "Panoramic Point 2.3 miles (3.7 km)." When not closed by snow, no trailers or RVs.

Overlooks & Views Nearby

- **McGee Vista Point:** For sunset views and a look out over the Central Valley, drive about 3 miles (5km) north of Grant Grove Village on the Generals Highway.

Finding Your Way

When snow makes it very hard to follow a trail on the ground, be careful not to get lost. It may be easier to follow ski-trail markers. These colored markers are placed intermittently on trees, above eye level. When you are standing by one, you should be able to see the next one; each points in the direction of the next marker. Thank you for not walking in the ski tracks.

Be sure to buy a map at the visitor center if you plan to use unpaved trails. It's important to get advice that matches the current conditions.

- **Kings Canyon Overlook:** To look north-east across the top of the Kings Canyon to the High Sierra, drive about 7 miles south of Grant Grove on the Generals Highway.

- **Redwood Mountain Overlook:** About 6 miles (9.5 km) south of Grant Grove, across the Generals Highway from the Quail Flat junction, this overlook faces west over one of the world's largest sequoia groves.

- **Kings Canyon Overlook:** For a view of the High Sierra, drive about 7 miles south of Grant Grove on the Generals Highway.

Kings Canyon & Cedar Grove

Highway 180 down into the canyon closes in winter due to rock falling from canyon walls onto the road. CalTrans reopens the road in late April (see page 12 for scheduled dates).

National Forest (USFS)

Explore Giant Sequoia National Monument, a part of Sequoia National Forest. Check page 12 for road closures, and see page 9 for some information about how the national parks and the national forests differ.

Three USFS trailheads offer snowplay, cross-country ski trails, and snowmobile routes. Rent skis, snowshoes, or buy snowplay equipment at Grant Grove or Montecito Lake Resort (page 9 has details). Get information and a map at Kings Canyon Visitor Center.

- **Cherry Gap:** on Highway 180 2.5 miles (4km) north of Grant Grove. It offers 10 miles (16km) of marked winter routes, including a ski trail to the Chicago Stump at the edge of Converse Basin grove. Virtually every mature sequoia in this huge grove was felled early in the 1900s. The stump is a remnant of a tree taken to exhibit at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

- **Quail Flat** (on the Generals Highway, 6 miles/9.6km south of Hwy 180) has 23 miles (37km) of trails and snowmobile routes. Some connect to Big Meadows.

- **Big Meadows** (on the Generals Highway, 8 miles/13km south of Hwy 180) offers 23 miles (37km) of marked, groomed trails and routes that traverse meadows and forest. One route goes to the 1916 Buck Rock Fire Lookout (the tower is closed in winter).



Plowing the Generals Highway

The Generals Highway

Driving this 80-year-old roadway is part of the experience of these parks. It carries you up almost a mile in elevation, and connects the General Sherman Tree to the General Grant Tree, thereby earning its name.

It can be a challenge to keep the road clear in the winter. Nicknamed "Sierra cement," local snows tend to harden over time, challenging even the parks' heaviest equipment.

Spring can offer even more challenges. Loosened by the freeze-thaw cycles of warming days but still-icy nights, rock falls add complications to getting the roads open. When machinery can't push or pull the large granite blocks off the pavement, park staff must blast them into smaller pieces.

Aside from the annual efforts to keep it passable, an intense effort is underway to upgrade the Generals Highway from the bottom up. For decades, a skin of pavement barely improved the original wagon road. Current work is building a route that can handle today's large numbers of modern vehicles, without losing the joys of a mountain road.

See page 12 for tips on driving these roads in winter.



Spring rockfall on the Generals Highway