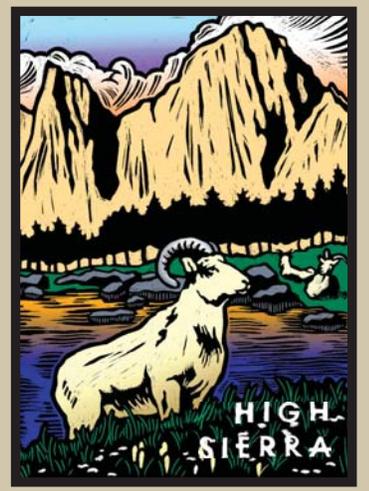


Visitor Guide: Summer 2015

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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



Celebration and challenge

This year brings both celebration and challenge to Sequoia and Kings Canyon, and we welcome you to embrace them both!

We celebrate three inspiring anniversaries this year. Sequoia National Park marks 125 years of protecting this landscape and the people who love it. The small, exquisite General Grant Grove National Park became a park just two weeks after Sequoia did, encompassing even more sequoia monarchs.

That was in 1890. Fifty years later, Congress designated Kings Canyon National Park. It swept little Grant Grove into an expansive wilderness park of Sierran peaks and canyons. It's been 75 years since then.

For all these years the parks have dazzled generations of us with beauty and challenge. They've taught us to look closer, think bigger, and celebrate even the toughest

aspects of Nature's nature.

So what is particularly challenging this year? Recent winters have brought very little snow. Arid summers are a way of life here, but imagine an already dry landscape after four full years of drought. Fuel moisture (a measure of how much water remains in dead twigs, branches, and logs) is at record lows. Many dead tree-tops dot a usually evergreen forest canopy.

How does one embrace something like this? By accepting the challenge and taking care not to add to its difficulties:

- Be aware that a tossed match, campfire sparks, a hot muffler, or overheated brakes can easily start a fire. Take pride in your efforts to prevent that from happening. Understand that fire managers may still need to use planned fire, sparingly, to reduce wildfire risk.

- Because campfire restrictions (see back page) serve to protect this forest, explore other ways to share meals and time with friends and family in the serenity of this place.

- Conserve water within the parks and beyond. The more we save, the more goes to the life around us, and the longer we can enjoy park facilities that have limited water sources.

- Admire the ability of life to persist and, where it does not, the ability of other life to pick up where it left off. Enjoy the cackling, drilling woodpeckers that gain new feeding places when trees succumb. Celebrate that cavity nesters such as flying squirrels, the rare Pacific fisher, owls, and many other animals will make their nests in dead trees.

Embrace the celebrations *and* the challenges! They let us enjoy and respect the true nature of the wild lands protected in these parks.

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