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2017/2018

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE PARKS

SEQUOIA & KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

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WELCOME

Welcome to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

Located in central California, the parks extend from the San Joaquin Valley foothills to the eastern crest of the Sierra Nevada. If trees could be kings, their royal realms would be in these two adjoining parks.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks testify to nature's size, beauty and diversity: They are home to immense mountains, rugged foothills, deep canyons, vast caverns and the world's largest trees. No matter the season,

you'll find myriad fun activities in the parks!

The National Park Service (NPS), Delaware North at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and Sequoia Parks Conservancy work together to ensure that your visit is memorable.

This *American Park Network* guide to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks is provided to help plan your visit. It is made possible by the support of the sponsors whose messages appear inside. Enjoy your visit and come back again!

FUN FACTS

Established: Sequoia National Park was established in 1890. It was California's first national park and is America's second oldest (after Yellowstone). Kings Canyon National Park was established in 1940, incorporating the much smaller General Grant National Park, which was established in 1890.

Land Area: Sharing a common boundary, Sequoia and Kings Canyon measure 66 miles from north to south and 36 miles across at their widest point. Together, they cover 865,964 acres.

Lowest & Highest Elevations: The lowest elevation is 1,370 feet (in the Ash Mountain area) and the highest is 14,494 feet at the summit of Mount Whitney, the tallest peak in the contiguous 48 states.

Plants & Animals: There are more than 1,530 species of vascular plants and more than 297 known native vertebrate species of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians.

Popular Sights: In Sequoia, see Crescent Meadow; the General Sherman Tree, Earth's largest living tree; and Moro Rock; all in Giant Forest, a magnificent sequoia grove. In Kings Canyon, see Kings River and the canyon that gives the park its name, the General Grant Grove of sequoia trees, and Panoramic Point with views of the Sierra Nevada.

Popular Activities: Free ranger-led walks and talks, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, photography, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are popular activities.

Hiking: There are more than 800 miles of marked trails. Nearly 97 percent of the parks is designated or managed as wilderness, accessible by foot or stock.

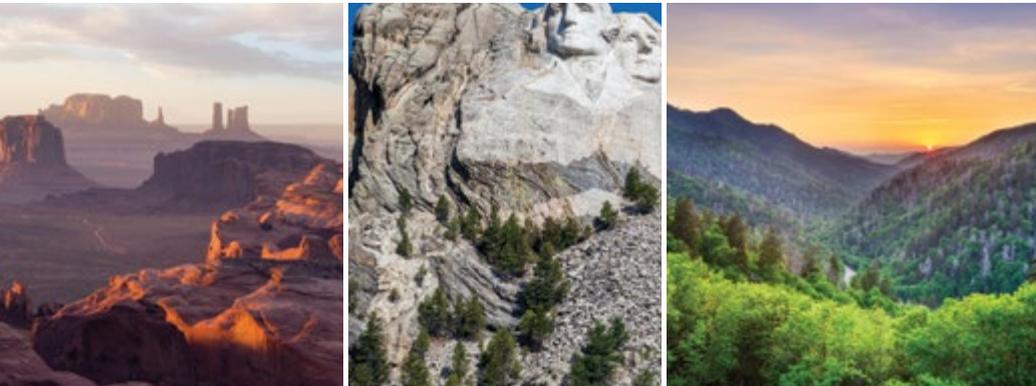
Camping & Lodging: Over 1,200 campsites and a variety of lodging accommodations are found in the parks.

Zion National Park is the result of erosion, sedimentary uplift, and Stephanie Shinmachi.

Members of the National Park Foundation community, like Stephanie, volunteer in parks across America, supporting everything the National Park Service does, from conservation to education. Find your park and join today.



Join the community at nationalparks.org



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Special thanks to Mark Tilchen and Richard Herron.

(Cover: Giant Sequoia by fotoguy22/iStock.)

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 For answers to all your questions, go to OhRanger.com



WHAT'S NEW! WHY PARKS MATTER

“There is nothing so American as our national parks.”

— Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Access to parks is one of the things that's truly great about life in America. Not just national parks, like FDR stated, but *all* parks. Parks afford everyone, regardless of race, income, social status or age, the opportunity to escape the concrete jungle and step into the wild. It doesn't matter whether it's a small step into a local park or a giant leap into the backcountry. The effect is the same. Time in nature feels good. Other values that parks bring may be less obvious. Since we take care of the things we value, I'd like to highlight a few other benefits we all receive from public lands:

Economic Impact America's federal, state and local parks and public lands generate \$200 billion in annual economic activity and support more than one million jobs! You might help a dozen businesses during a weekend hiking trip. Imagine the impact of a week-long national park adventure. Parks raise property values, too!

Conservation Trees produce the oxygen we need to survive, but did you know that they also help save money? It's estimated that trees in cities save \$400 billion in costs to retain stormwater. A single tree can store 100 gallons or more, which helps keep streets from flooding and reduces the need for artificial storage facilities. A tree can also absorb as much as three tons of carbon gas during its lifetime.



Mark, Joel & Alex — Support parks, stay healthy!

Take a deep breath in a park and you'll immediately know the value of greenspace.

Health & Wellness Studies show a high correlation between time spent in parks and improved health (and, in my view, happiness). You move more when you're outside, which decreases stress, makes you more fit and reduces the risk of many health issues, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. Exercise (which parks inspire) also positively impacts your cholesterol levels. A few years ago, I started bicycling to work every day. A year later, my overall cholesterol went down while my HDL—the “good” cholesterol—went up. The results of a small change in your exercise routine can be amazing! Parks invite this change.

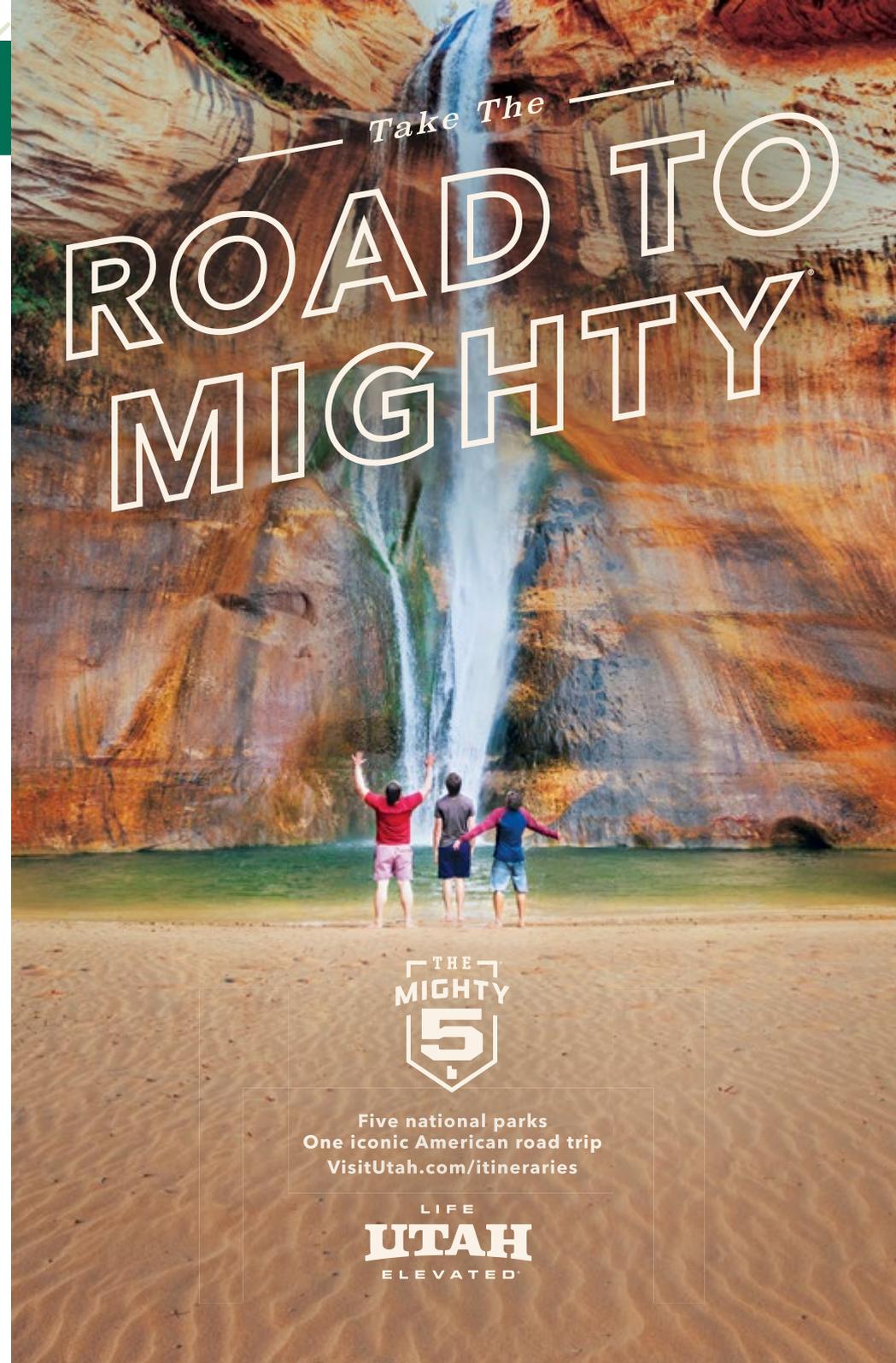
The value of parks is undeniable, so follow FDR's lead and support our public lands. It's the all-American thing to do. (Congress, take note!) You'll save the country money while improving our nation's health—and your own, too. Not a bad combination!

mark@americanparknetwork.com



GET CONNECTED AT YOUR FAVORITE PARKS!

Parks are about enjoying nature, but what if you want to share a great picture or are awaiting an important email? If you're looking to add connectivity to your park, or if you already have Wi-Fi and would like help adding content or generating sponsor revenues, please let us know at wifi@americanparknetwork.com.



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PLAN YOUR VISIT

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are located in Central California, approximately four to five hours from Los Angeles and San Francisco. In the summer, the city of Visalia operates a shuttle to Sequoia National Park that connects with the free in-park shuttle system in Giant Forest.

GETTING TO SEQUOIA

Car: Take Highway 99 to Visalia. From there, take Highway 198 east (36 miles) to the main park entrance. The 16 miles of road from the park entrance to Giant Forest includes 130 curves and 12 switchbacks.

Vehicles longer than 22 feet (6.7056 meters) are not advised between Potwisha Campground and Giant Forest Museum in Sequoia National Park. Vehicles longer than 24 feet (7.3152 meters) are not advised between the Foothills Visitor Center and Potwisha Campground in Sequoia National Park.

Note: Pay close attention to advisories, for your safety and the safety of others. The alternative: Take Highway 180 from Fresno to Grant Grove, then turn south on the Generals Highway, the main road through the parks.

GETTING TO KINGS CANYON

Car: Take Highway 99 to Fresno. Then take Highway 180 east (about 53 miles) to the park entrance. The entrance to Kings Canyon is also the "back door" to Sequoia and is a straighter, less steep road than Highway 198. There are no east-west roads that cross the Sierra Nevada through Kings Canyon or Sequoia.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Air: The closest major airport is Fresno Yosemite International Airport (53 miles west of Kings Canyon).

Bus: Greyhound/Trailways serves Visalia and Fresno.

Train: Amtrak serves Hanford (with bus connections to Visalia) and Fresno.

Car: Rental cars are available at airports and in Visalia and Fresno.

Shuttle: The city of Visalia operates two shuttles. The **Sequoia Shuttle** runs from Visalia to Exeter and Three Rivers, and up to the Giant Forest Museum in the park. Round-trip costs \$15 and no additional park entrance fee is required.

A **free in-park shuttle**, operated in partnership with the National Park Service, runs in the Potwisha, Giant Forest, Lodgepole, Dorst Creek and Wuksachi Lodge areas. Shuttles run regularly from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. For details and reservations, visit sequoiashuttle.com or call (877) BUS-HIKE (287-4453).

HOURS

In general, the parks are open year-round, 24 hours a day, but several areas and roads are closed in winter. Some closures are temporary, depending on snow.

Tire chains or cables may be required. High mountain trails are often snow-bound until July 1. *Note: The roads to Cedar Grove, Mineral King, Moro Rock and Crystal Cave close during winter. The highway that runs between Sequoia and Kings Canyon may also close in winter.*



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ENTRANCE FEES

Entrance to the parks is \$30 per private, non-commercial vehicle or \$15 per person for pedestrians or cyclists for seven consecutive days. A fee for commercial vehicles is based on vehicle capacity. An annual pass for Sequoia and Kings Canyon is offered for \$50 and is good for one year from the month of purchase. For other fees and passes visit [nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/fees.htm](https://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/fees.htm).

EVERY KID IN A PARK

To help engage and create our next generation of park visitors, supporters and advocates, the Obama White House, in partnership with the Federal Land Management agencies, launched the Every Kid in a Park initiative. The immediate goal is to provide an opportunity for each and every 4th grade student across the country to experience their federal public lands and waters in person.

All kids in the fourth grade have access to their own Every Kid in a Park pass. This pass admits the pass owner and any ac-

companying passengers in a private non-commercial vehicle to the park.

You can obtain the pass by visiting [everykidinapark.gov](https://www.everykidinapark.gov) and you must print it and present it at the park. The Every Kid in a Park pass is valid until August 31, 2017.

WEATHER

Temperatures vary quite a bit due to elevation differences throughout the parks. Mid-summer temperatures at lower elevations fluctuate from the 70s to 100°F+ and temperatures at middle elevations range from the 50s to the high 70s. Winter usually brings plenty of snow, though temperatures seldom dip below 0°F.

SPECIAL SERVICES ♿

Park activities and facilities that are fully accessible to visitors with disabilities are indicated by the ♿ symbol. Many programs and facilities are fully accessible, or accessible with assistance. In winter, access is difficult because of snow and ice. Although some paths are

cleared, visitors with disabilities may still need assistance.

Loaner copies of the park brochure in Braille are available at park visitor centers.

VISITOR CENTERS

When you arrive, stop at a visitor center to get an overview of the parks. Wilderness/backcountry permits, ranger-led program info, maps, books and other park literature are available. Visitor centers also have restrooms and water fountains. For more information, call (559) 565-3341.

Cedar Grove Visitor Center in Kings Canyon is 0.25-mile west of Cedar Grove Village and 30 miles east of Grant Grove Village. Access is via Highway 180 on a 27-mile stretch of road in Sequoia National Forest. The visitor center is open Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day.

Foothills Visitor Center is adjacent to Three Rivers on Highway 198, one mile east of Sequoia's Ash Mountain entrance. The center features exhibits on Sequoia's foothills ecosystem.

Giant Forest Museum is located in Giant Forest, 18 miles from the park entrance on Generals Highway. There are exhibits on giant sequoia ecology and the trees' relationship with man. The museum is open daily year-round.

Kings Canyon Visitor Center is in Grant Grove Village, three miles north-east of the Kings Canyon park entrance on Highway 180. The exhibits and movie are bilingual and address Kings Canyon, sequoia trees and the high country. Open daily year-round.

Lodgepole Visitor Center is 21 miles north of the park entrance in Sequoia, and two miles north of the General Sher-

man Tree. The center features exhibits on the area's scenic wonders, history, wildlife and geology. It is open daily in summer and closed in winter.

Mineral King Ranger Station is in Sequoia on the Mineral King Road, which junctions with Highway 198 in Three Rivers. It is located 25 miles southeast of Three Rivers. Trailers and RVs are prohibited on the road. The station is open during summer only, while the area is open summer to mid-fall, weather permitting.

VISITOR SERVICES

Banking Services: ATMs are available at Grant Grove, Cedar Grove and Lodgepole. Reedley is 45 miles west of Kings Canyon, just off Highway 180. ATMs, foreign currency and other banking services are found there, as well as in Fresno, Visalia and Three Rivers.

Camping & Picnic Supplies: These are available in summer at markets at Lodgepole in Sequoia and Grant Grove and Cedar Grove in Kings Canyon.

Emergencies: Call **911** for emergency fire, medical or police assistance, or to report accidents or injuries. **First-aid facilities** are available at park headquarters, visitor centers and ranger stations. The closest hospital to Sequoia is in Visalia and to Kings Canyon is in Reedley.

Gift Shops: DNC shops are located at Wuksachi Lodge (year-round), Lodgepole (year-round), Grant Grove (year-round) and Cedar Grove (summer to mid-fall).

Lost & Found: Report to a ranger station or visitor center. Contact: Property Office, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Ash Mountain, Three Rivers, CA 93271; (559) 565-3341.

Pay Showers & Laundry: Showers

FEDERAL RECREATION LANDS PASSES

A federal recreation pass is helpful if you plan to visit many national parks, forests or other federal lands. For information, call (888) 275-8747 or visit [store.usgs.gov/pass](https://www.store.usgs.gov/pass).

Type	Cost	Availability	Details
Annual Pass	\$80	General Public	This one-year pass is available on site, by phone or online (see above).
Senior Pass	\$10	U.S. residents age 62+	This lifetime pass is available on site or via mail order. ID required.
Military Pass	Free	U.S. military members and their dependents	This one-year pass is available on site. ID (CAC Card or DoD Form 1173) required.
Access Pass	Free	U.S. residents with permanent disabilities	This lifetime pass is available on site or via mail order. ID and documentation required.
Volunteer Pass	Free	250 cumulative volunteer service hours	Inquire locally to obtain information about this one-year pass.

are located at Lodgepole, Cedar Grove and Mineral King in the parks and at Stony Creek in Sequoia National Forest. Coin-operated laundry is available at Cedar Grove, Lodgepole and Stony Creek. Open seasonally. Fees vary. Check at the John Muir Lodge for public showers at Grant Grove.

Pets & Kennels: There are kennels located in nearby Fresno and Visalia. Pets must at all times wear a leash no longer than 6 feet and are not allowed on park trails. Never leave pets in unattended vehicles or left tied.

Post Offices: Two post offices offer varied services in the parks. The post office at **Lodgepole Village** in Sequoia is open 24 hours, but isn't staffed. Located behind the Lodgepole Visitor Center and Market, it allows for letter-drop only—mail must have postage. The post office at **Grant Grove** in Kings Canyon—north of the visitor center and gift shop, in the same building as the market—is staffed, but hours vary. The lobby is open 24 hours

for pre-postage letter-drop. Address visitor mail and backpackers' resupply packages to: Cedar Grove Visitor Center, 108417 Westside Drive, Kings Canyon NP, CA 93633. For more information, call (559) 355-2499.

Recycling: Markets and stores operated by Delaware North charge a five-cent refundable deposit for recyclable containers. Recycling bins are available throughout the parks.

Religious Services: In summer, various services may be conducted. Check visitor centers, lodge front desks or local bulletin boards for schedules and locations.

Service Stations: Gasoline is not available in the parks. Get gas outside the parks or at Hume Lake (year-round) or Stony Creek (summer only) in the National Forest. For emergency services (lock-outs, jump-starts, out-of-gas) in Sequoia National Park, call (559) 565-4070. For emergency car repairs, call (559) 565-3341.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

General Park Information (24-hour recording)	(559) 565-3341 nps.gov/seki
Emergencies	911
Lodging Reservations/ Cancellations	(866) 807-3598
General Camping, Backpacking & Wilderness/Backcountry Information	(559) 565-3341
Campground Reservations (summer use at Lodgepole, Dorst Creek, Potwisha & Buckeye Flat)	(877) 444-6777 recreation.gov
Cross-Country Ski & Snowshoe Information (Wuksachi Lodge & Grant Grove)	(559) 565-3341
Special Services	(559) 565-3341
Lost & Found	(559) 565-3341
Road & Weather Information (recorded message)	(559) 565-3341



WHO'S WHO AT THE PARKS

The following organizations ensure that the parks and public lands are protected and that your stay is enjoyable.

of the parks. For more information, contact the NPS by calling (559) 565-3341 or visiting [nps.gov/seki](https://www.nps.gov/seki).



SEQUOIA & KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS)

Since its founding in 1916, the National Park Service has endeavored to preserve America's parklands for future generations. It is responsible for preserving and protecting the environmental and cultural values of our national parks, protecting the fish and wildlife therein, and providing for public use and enjoyment

DELAWARE NORTH AT SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

The official concessioner for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, Delaware North operates facilities and offers services at Lodgepole, Wuksachi Lodge, Wolverton and Bear Paw High Sierra Camp (all in Sequoia National Park) and at Grant Grove Village—including John Muir Lodge and Grant Grove Cabins—and Cedar Grove Village (all in Kings Canyon National Park). Services offered include lodging, dining, markets, retail and rentals. For more information or to make

Delaware North



Located approximately two miles from Wuksachi Lodge, the Lodgepole Market—open year-round—carries a wide variety of grocery supplies, as well as souvenirs and apparel.



Ernie Tyler

document new species in park caves and support the Sequoia Field Institute. The Conservancy is committed to raising funds for other projects, including “Rangers in the Classroom,” to foster new environmental stewards in California’s Central Valley. For more information, call (559) 561-4803 or visit sequoiaparksconservancy.org.



SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST

UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE (USFS)

The Sequoia National Forest, named for the world’s largest trees, celebrates the greatest concentration of giant sequoia groves in the world. Protected within the Giant Sequoia National Monument, these groves and the areas around them are managed by the USFS for today and for future generations.

A publicly owned treasure, visitors to the Giant Sequoia National Monument will find not only majestic trees, but also diverse geologic formations, ecosystems, wildlife and lakes. For more information, call (559) 784-1500 or visit www.fs.usda.gov/sequoia.

KINGS CANYON PARK SERVICES COMPANY (KCPS)

KCPS operates the Montecito Sequoia Lodge and the Stony Creek Lodge. Both facilities provide lodging and dining in the Giant Sequoia National Monument, located between Sequoia National Park and Kings Canyon National Park. For reservations or for more information, call (877) 828-1440 or visit sequoia-kingscanyon.com.

A Civilian Conservation Corps enrollee created this welcome sign in the 1930s.

reservations, contact Delaware North at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks by calling (866) 807-3598 or visiting visitsequoiakingscanyon.com.

SEQUOIA PARKS CONSERVANCY

Founded in 1940, this nonprofit organization supports the educational, preservation and scientific activities in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. In addition to publishing the park newspaper, *The Visitor Guide*, it offers up-to-date seasonal information about the parks. The Conservancy sells books, maps and interpretive or educational items relating to the parks. The Conservancy also operates tours of Crystal Cave, (see “Sights To See” chapter for more information), EdVentures (outdoor classes in the parks), and hire-a-naturalist services for commercial groups and families. The Conservancy likewise raises money for projects that enhance the preservation, restoration and enjoyment of the parks. Contributions from the Conservancy have helped build accessible trails,



PARK REGULATIONS & SAFETY

You can make the most of your visit to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks by planning ahead and becoming acquainted with some simple precautions, all of which are designed to enhance your safety and enjoyment. Please review and observe the following park regulations and safety tips.



STAYING SAFE

- **Bears** can cause severe property damage while trying to get to people’s food. Park regulations require proper storage of food to prevent bears from accessing it. Never leave food or scented items in cars. Store all food and anything with an odor (including toiletries) in bear-proof food-storage lockers where provided. Lodge guests must bring all items indoors. Keep a clean camp and deposit garbage in trash cans or dumpsters. Make loud noises to scare bears away.
- When **hiking** on wilderness/backcountry trails, let someone know your itinerary. For more hiking safety tips, please see the “Walking & Hiking” chapter.
- Keep **valuables** with you.
- Be prepared for various **weather** conditions. Summer temperatures in the foothills often exceed 100°F, so wear sunscreen and a hat, carry plenty of water and hike in the early morning. Bring proper equipment (tire chains, clothing, flares, etc.) in winter.
- Be on the lookout for **mountain lions** (also known as cougars, pumas or panthers). If you encounter one, back away slowly, wave or shout. Do not run. If attacked, fight back! Children should be kept close by.
- Be careful where you step or reach because you may encounter the poisonous **western rattlesnake**, which is common below 7,000-foot elevations and is occasionally found at elevations as high as 11,000 feet. Snake bites, though rarely fatal, require a doctor’s attention. If bitten, avoid moving—to prevent the spread of venom—and send for help immediately. Snakes are a native species and should not be disturbed.
- If you camp or hike in the foothills, use insect repellent and check your clothes frequently for **ticks**. Ticks can carry Lyme disease; if you are bitten, check for a rash at the bite and later for flu-like symptoms.
- **Do not touch or feed** ground squirrels or other rodents. They may carry disease.
- Learn to identify **poison oak**, which is widespread up to the 5,000-foot elevation. The low-growing plant has glossy leaves that grow in clusters of three. Follow the adage: “Leaves of three, let it be.”
- **Giardiasis**, an intestinal disorder caused by the protozoan *Giardia lamblia*, can result from drinking water taken directly from streams and lakes. Always carry sufficient drinking water. If you haven’t, you must purify water taken from streams and lakes by boiling it for three to five minutes, or by using an appropriately rated water filter.



Anatoly Lukich

Climbing the 400 steps up to Moro Rock for a panoramic view of the High Sierra and canyons is a favorite visitor activity. But be careful with those selfie sticks!



PARK REGULATIONS

- **Bicycles** (including mountain bikes) are permitted only on paved roads and in campgrounds. They are prohibited on park trails or cross-country terrain.
- **Camp** only in designated campsites. To camp in the wilderness/backcountry, you must obtain a **wilderness permit**, which is available at permit stations.
- You can purchase wood at most concessioner markets. Gather only dead and downed wood (except giant sequoia wood) for **firewood**. Build fires only in established fire rings or fireplaces. No fires above 11,000 feet.
- No **fireworks** are allowed in the park.
- **Firearms** are allowed as long as the person is legally allowed to have the firearm. He or she must comply with federal firearms laws and the laws of the state in which the park is located. Discharging the weapon is not allowed.
- **Hunting** is strictly prohibited.
- **Don't litter.** Pack out all that you packed in. Take only pictures, leave only footprints.
- When **hiking, please** stay on the trails. Trail-cutting tramples vegetation and promotes erosion.
- **Pets** must always be leashed. They are not allowed on trails, in public buildings or in the wilderness/backcountry. Never leave them unattended. Service animals are allowed on trails and in public buildings. The nearest kennels are located in Fresno and Visalia. Pet sitting available in Three Rivers.
- **Swimming** is not recommended in the parks' rivers, streams and waterfalls because they are very cold and deceptively fast and dangerous, especially in spring and early summer.
- **Vandalism** and the removal of rocks, plants or any natural feature, including sequoia cones, is strictly prohibited. Everything plays a role in the natural cycle of the park.
- Don't feed, chase or harass park **wild-life**. You are visiting their homes.



HISTORY & CULTURE

NATIVE PEOPLES

Native peoples have traveled these mountains since prehistoric times. The most recent to inhabit the Kings Canyon area were the Monache, or Western Mono, a Paiute group that migrated over the Sierra Nevada from the Owens Valley and Mono Lake areas. They built semi-permanent homes that consisted of conical frames of willow poles covered with strips of cedar bark. The **Monache**, like many other Indian groups in the area, moved into and out of the mountains and forests seasonally. Their year-round villages were located in the lower elevations, close to the Kings and Kaweah Rivers.

Acorns were the staple food of these people. Bedrock mortars, arranged close together so that the women could socialize as they worked, are visible at different points along the river between Cedar Grove and Bubbs Creek in Kings Canyon and at Hospital Rock in Sequoia. Acorn meal was baked into cakes or boiled into mush by putting hot stones into baskets filled with water and meal. The Monache supplemented their diet with numerous plants and game, including fish and deer.

In summer, the Monache traded with the **Paiutes**, who were still living in the **Owens Valley** on the far side of the mountains. A well-developed trail—which ran east of Bubbs Creek to the 11,823-foot-high Kearsarge Pass and then dropped sharply into the valley—served as one of the key trade routes between the tribes. They traded acorn meal, deer skins and arrow shafts made of tule reeds for the Paiutes' pine nuts, salt and obsidian (a volcanic glass used to make arrowheads and other stone

tools). A little farther to the west of today's parks lived the numerous groups of **Yokuts** Indians. **Foothill Yokuts** groups, such as the **Wukchumni** and the **Choynimni**, also used the areas within today's parks.

TRAPPERS & EXPLORERS

In search of a mission site, Spaniard **Gabriel Moraga** was the first European to enter the Kings River area in 1806. The party discovered a major river on January 6, the day of Epiphany, for which they christened it El Río de los Santos Reyes: The River of the Holy Kings (the three wise men who visited the infant Jesus). The name was later shortened to Kings River. (This is why Kings River and Kings Canyon are never spelled with apostrophes.)

Beginning in 1827, **American trappers** and explorers began to trickle through the lofty passes and deep valleys on both sides of the Sierra. It was the **Gold Rush of 1849**, however, that drew thousands of outsiders to California. These newcomers, searching for mineral wealth, began the exploration of the mountains.

The newcomers also brought smallpox and measles with them, which devastated native people living in the area. Many died during an epidemic in 1862. Some moved away, but some stayed in the San Joaquin Valley, where their descendants still live.

The first scientific exploration of the area was conducted in 1864. Harvard geology professor, **Josiah Dwight Whitney**, director of the newly formed California Geological Survey, sent a team of five men to map the region and identify its major features. Survey Field Director **William Brewer**, for whom Mount Brewer was named, led the

Oh, Ranger!
FUN FACTS

Q. IS IT TRUE THAT BUILDINGS WERE REMOVED FROM SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK?



A. Yes. Nearly 300 buildings, a gas station, a sewage treatment plant, a hotel, two markets and over 24 acres of asphalt were removed during the Giant Forest Restoration Project in the late 1990s.

For answers to all your questions, go to OhRanger.com

group. Brewer named the highest peak “Mount Whitney” to honor his supervisor.

JOHN MUIR

In 1873, John Muir, the famous naturalist, visited Kings Canyon. Muir was impressed by its similarity to the terrain of Yosemite Valley. It was not long, however, before the pristine setting began to change. In the 1870s, ranchers grazed their cattle and sheep—“hooved locusts”—among the Big Trees, and sawmills were built.

Ironically, sequoia wood is brittle and breaks across the grain when it falls, so it was limited for use as timber. Nevertheless, the early loggers proceeded to chop down and carry away one-third of the ancient trees.

It’s amazing to think, today, that the sequoias were being cut down and the wood used to make pencils and even grape stakes in some early California vineyards. The number of Big Trees would have greatly

decreased had it not been for mid-19th century conservationists. Among the leaders were John Muir, who chronicled the destruction of the sequoias at Converse Basin, and **George W. Stewart**, often called the “Father of Sequoia National Park.”

In 1877, Muir climbed to the Converse Basin, six miles north of Grant Grove and once the home of the area’s largest grouping of giant trees. Nearby, he found Hyde’s sawmill, one of five in the area. It was “booming and moaning like a bad ghost,” he recalled. Eventually, the loggers cut down most of the mature trees in the basin.

NATIONAL PARK STATUS

In 1878, George Stewart, editor of the *Visalia Delta*, began writing editorials condemning the wholesale cutting of sequoias. In 1881, Muir and **U.S. Senator John F. Miller** of California joined Stewart in an effort to enact a bill to protect the trees. It died in committee and Muir turned his attention to protecting Yosemite.

The residents of Visalia, however, carried on the battle and eventually succeeded. On September 25, 1890, **President Benjamin Harrison** signed the bill that established Sequoia National Park. It was America’s second national park. A week later, Congress increased the park’s size threefold and created General Grant National Park to protect Grant Grove. This uniquely American invention—the creation of national parks and forest reserves—signified the government’s intentions to limit unrestrained exploitation of the land.

Stephen T. Mather, who later became the first director of the National Park Service, led further efforts to preserve the magnificent trees. **Congressman Frederick Gillett** and **Gilbert Grosvenor**, president of the National Geographic So-

Clockwise from top left: Filippo Bacci/Stock, m01229; Peiqi/Stock



Clockwise from left: In the company of giants; The General Sherman Tree; Sequoia trees are so large that tunnels could be cut into them, a practice that the National Park Service ended many years ago.

ciety, became Mather’s staunch allies. Gillett helped pass legislation to expand the park and Grosvenor’s National Geographic Society provided the funds enabling the acquisition of nearly 2,000 acres of land. Sequoia National Park was expanded in 1926 to include Kern Canyon and Mount Whitney.

Forty-nine years after John Muir published an article advocating the creation of “one grand national park” that included Kings Canyon, his goal was finally realized. After a long and bitter debate, Kings Canyon National Park was established on March 4, 1940. The new park absorbed the tiny General Grant National Park, and the

sequoias within the boundaries were forever protected from logging.

As a World War II economic measure, Sequoia and Kings Canyon were managed jointly beginning in 1943, a successful policy that continues today.

In the 1960s, the area was once again threatened by developers. After intense debate, serious consideration of building dams in the upper Kings River watershed ended. In a separate issue, environmentalists thwarted a plan provided by the U.S. Forest Service. The steep, glacier-carved valley of Mineral King was added to Sequoia National Park in 1978, and the remote area remains protected today.

🚩 **GEOLOGIC HISTORY**



Chris Boswell

400 million years ago During the Paleozoic era (the period when seed-bearing plants, amphibians and reptiles first appeared), a shallow inland sea flooded what is now eastern California and Nevada.

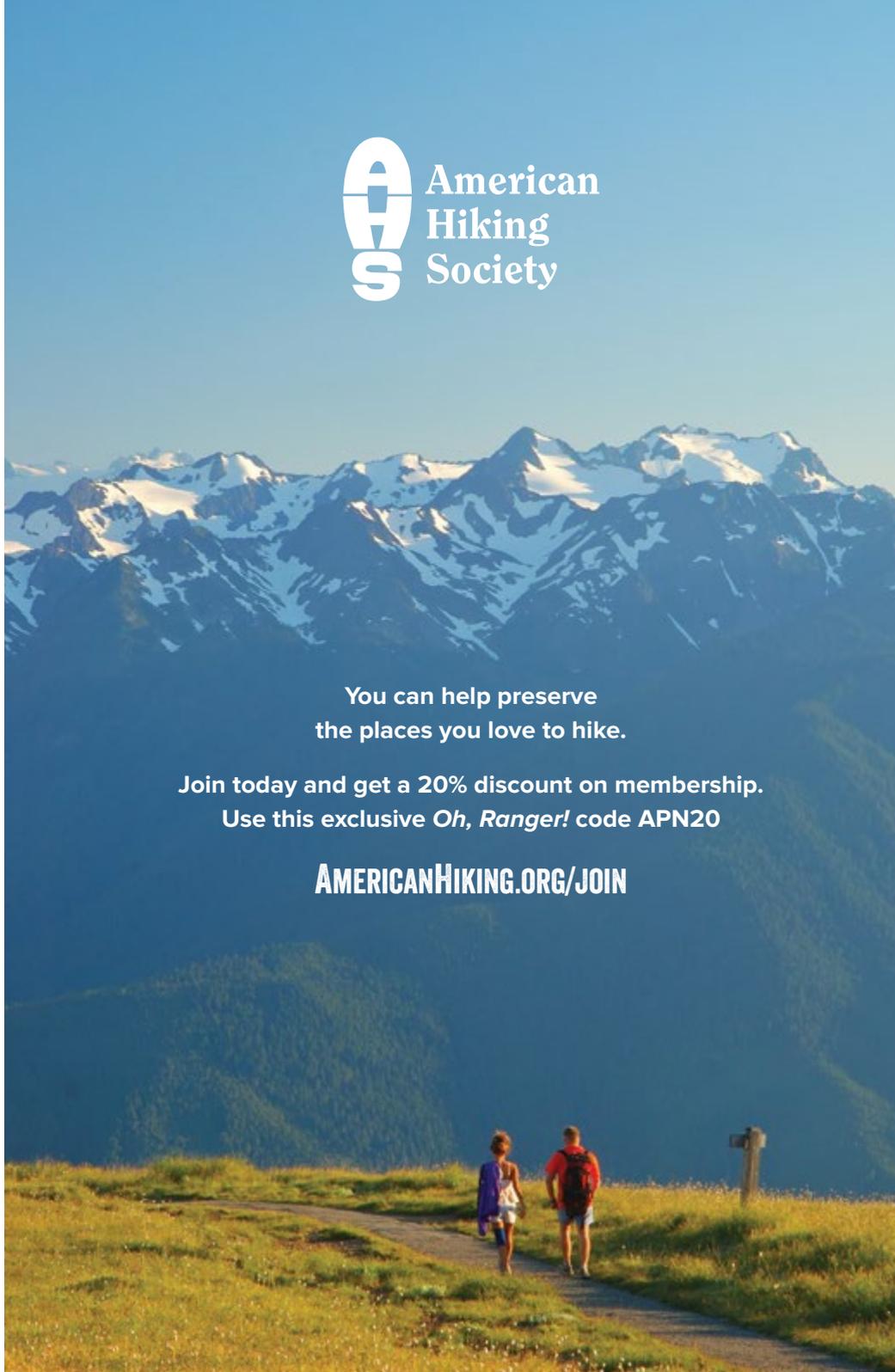
70 to 220 million years ago Part of the Pacific plate slid under the North American plate, a process that took 150 million years. Heat and pressure deep within the earth liquefied the plate into a vast underground pool of magma (or molten rock). The pool cooled and hardened into a crystalline block of granite. This subterranean block was folded and crushed into a mountain range by the movement of the plates.

10 to 70 million years ago Wind and water eroded the mountains to an almost flat plain for 60 million years, rivers carried tons of sediment from the mountains to the inland sea to create what are now the fertile San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys.

5 to 10 million years ago Pressure within the earth's crust fractured the eastern granite block. The Sierran block tilted westward in a series of small uplifts. The Sierra Nevada, California's "backbone," rose to become one of the world's longest continuous mountain ranges. Streams raced through the uplifted rock, carving steep V-shaped canyons. The steep lower canyon in the Middle Fork of the Kings River was formed during this period.

2 to 3 million years ago The earth's climate cooled, and glaciers sculpted and carved out hanging valleys, deep U-shaped canyons and glacial lakes in the Sierra Nevada. The biggest and longest glacier, a 44-mile-long ice field, filled V-shaped Kings Canyon, widening it into a U-shaped valley.

Today The geologic past can be seen throughout the parks. Darwin Glacier hides in a basin on Mount Darwin in Kings Canyon. Roaring River Falls and Mist Falls cascade from hanging valleys. Glacial lakes dot the Monarch Divide and a glacial staircase climbs the Sixty Lake Basin. Hot springs indicate the presence of hot rock beneath the surface. Recent earthquakes demonstrate the continuation of the process.



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SIGHTS TO SEE

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are masterpieces created by nature. Here you can see the world's largest living organism or marvel at the wild Kings River. The following are just a few of the sights to see in the parks.



SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK

CRESCENT MEADOW

John Muir is said to have called this lovely, grassy open area the "gem of the Sierra." It is located 1.5 miles east of the Moro Rock parking area. A hike on the trail around the meadow takes about an hour.

CRYSTAL CAVE

The parks protect more than 250 caves, but only Crystal Cave is open to the public. Formed of limestone that metamorphosed into marble, it is decorated with curtains of icicle-like stalactites and mounds of stalagmites. To reach it, you must drive to the end of the twisting, seven-mile Crystal Cave road heading west from the Generals Highway two miles south of the Giant Forest Museum. Trailers, RVs and buses are prohibited because the road is extremely narrow. From the parking area, it is a 15-minute hike down a steep path to the cave entrance. Sequoia Parks Conservancy offers daily 45-minute guided tours from Memorial Day Weekend to September. A jacket or sweater is recommended since it is about 50°F in the cave.

For information, ask at any park visitor center, visit explorecrystalcave.com. Tickets are not sold at the cave, but they are required. They may be purchased in advance at recreation.gov or at the Lodgepole and Foothills visitor centers. We recommend purchasing tickets online, as they can sell out, or check at a visitor center first thing in the morning.

GENERAL SHERMAN TREE

This gargantuan sequoia tree, while neither the tallest nor the widest, is considered the largest living tree in the world because of its volume. It weighs approximately 2.7 million pounds, and it is believed to be approximately 2,200 years old. Its height is nearly 275 feet, and its circumference at ground level is 102.6 feet. The diameter of its largest branch is 6.8 feet. Every year, it adds enough wood to make a 60-foot tree measuring one foot in diameter, and it's still growing. It was named in 1879 by James Wolverton, a pioneer cat-

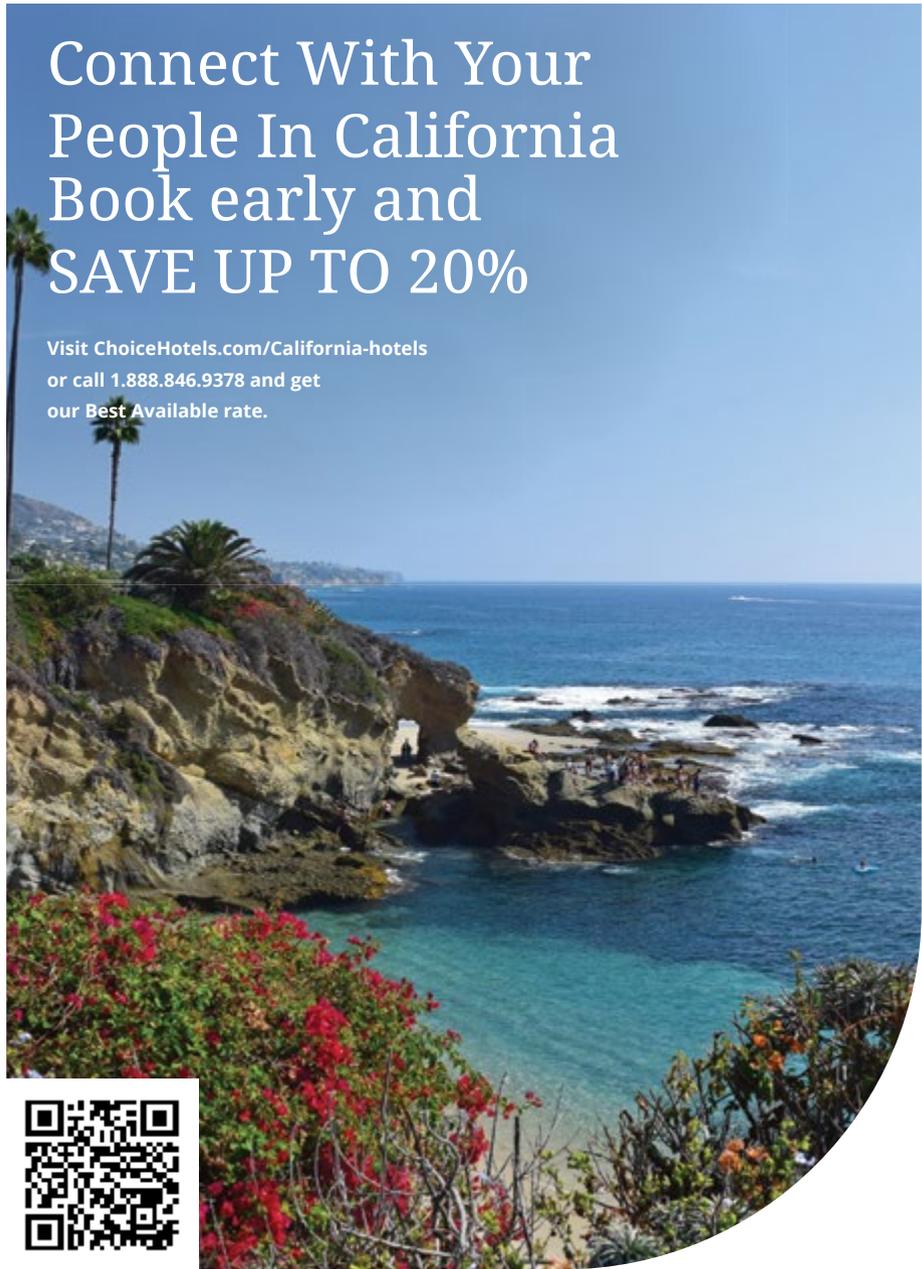
Oh, Ranger!
FUN FACTS

Q. HOW BIG IS THE GENERAL SHERMAN TREE?

A. It is the largest tree in the world! It contains 52,508 cubic feet of wood and is more than 2,000 years old. At nearly 275 feet tall, it's about the same height as the Statue of Liberty!



 For answers to all your questions, go to OhRanger.com



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tleman who had served under General William Tecumseh Sherman in the Civil War. The tree is accessed from Wolverton Road, four miles north of the Giant Forest Museum along the Generals Highway. ▲

GIANT FOREST

Named in 1875 by explorer and conservationist John Muir, Giant Forest is celebrated for its beautiful meadows and its sequoia grove, the park's most famous attraction. The first thing to do in Giant Forest is to go to the Giant Forest Museum, where exhibits and park rangers will help you understand the story of this beautiful grove. The cinnamon-colored Big Trees, members of the redwood family, may be seen today as Muir found them, "Giants grouped in pure temple groves, or arranged in colonnades along the sides of meadows." The northern fringe of the grove is guarded by the General Sherman Tree, the largest tree in the world. The two-mile looping Congress Trail provides access to many of these trees.

HOSPITAL ROCK

Hospital Rock, about six miles northeast of the Foothills Visitor Center, was home to a subgroup of the Monache people until the 1870s. You can see pictographs as well as more than 15 grinding holes used by Monache women to grind acorns into flour, the staple of these American Indians' diets.

MINERAL KING

On Highway 198, two miles before the park entrance, is a 25-mile winding road leading to Mineral King. Because of the narrow winding road, the drive takes approximately 1.5 hours. The glacial valley, added to Sequoia in 1978, was named by 19th-century prospectors searching for silver. To see Mineral King at a leisurely pace, it is

best to stay at one of the two area campgrounds, Atwell Mill or Cold Springs (no trailers permitted). With 11 different trails, Mineral King is a hiker's heaven. Avalanches have mowed down trees on the valley floor, so lowlands are covered with wild meadows. Forests of Lodgepole pine, sequoias and white and red fir are at higher elevations. The rocky landscape is colorful: rusty-red shales, white marble and granite, and black metamorphic slate. Alpine trails begin at the 7,500-foot elevation and most climbs are steep. This road is closed in winter; it also prohibits RVs and trailers in any season.

MORO ROCK

Moro Rock is a large granite dome also found in the Giant Forest area. Common in the Sierra Nevada, domes are formed by **exfoliation**, or the casting off in sheets of rock layers on otherwise unjointed granite. Outward expansion of the granite results in exfoliation. Taking the 0.25-mile trail, you can climb nearly 400 steep steps to the top of the barren rock (6,725-foot elevation). It offers an unparalleled view (especially at sunset) of the Great Western Divide and its verdant canyons. Watch out for lightning. The Moro Rock parking area is 1.5 miles from the Giant Forest Museum. The road may be closed in winter and/or at other times. Check at park visitor centers for more information.

THARP'S LOG

Hale Tharp, the first non-American Indian settler in the area, established a cattle ranch among the Big Trees. He also built a simple summer cabin from a fallen, fire-hollowed sequoia log in the 1860s. It is the oldest pioneer cabin remaining in the park. Muir called it "a noble den." The cabin is located in the Giant Forest area, a mile northeast of the Crescent Meadow parking lot.



The Mark Twain Stump is all that remains of a 1,700-year-old tree.



KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK

BIG STUMP TRAIL

Near the entrance to Kings Canyon National Park, three miles southwest of Grant Grove Village, is Big Stump Basin Trail. The one-mile loop trail reveals the remains of early logging. The Mark Twain Stump is all that's left of the 26-foot-wide, 1,700-year-old tree that took two men 13 days to cut down in 1891. Also, because sequoia wood decays slowly, piles of sawdust created more than a century ago still remain.

BOYDEN CAVE

You can't miss the entrance to this cave, found where Highway 180 crosses the South Fork of the Kings River. Located 18 miles east of Grant Grove, the cave is in Sequoia National Forest. Daily tours are conducted from sum-

mer to mid-fall; call (888) 965-8243 for more information. *Note: Boyden Cavern is currently closed due to fire sustained in 2015.*

CEDAR GROVE & KINGS CANYON

Highway 180 ends 40 miles from the entrance to Kings Canyon National Park in the famous Kings Canyon itself. Cedar Grove, nestled in a mile-deep section of Kings Canyon, is near two spectacular granite formations: Grand Sentinel at 8,518 feet in elevation and North Dome at 8,717 feet in elevation. The precipitous Grand Sentinel rises 3,500 feet above the canyon floor. The best place in the park to see these features is on the Zumwalt Meadow Trail.

GRANT GROVE & THE GENERAL GRANT TREE

Grant Grove is located one mile beyond the Kings Canyon Visitor Center on the west side of the road. From the parking area, a 0.3-mile loop trail leads to the General Grant Tree. The tree, which measures



MOUNT WHITNEY

Crowning the Sierra Nevada, majestic Mount Whitney stands 14,494 feet tall. It is the **tallest mountain in the contiguous United States**. You can see it only from the eastern reaches of the wilderness of Sequoia or from Highway 395, near Lone Pine, outside the parks. To reach Mount Whitney from western trailheads, backpackers take a 56- to 71-mile, multi-day trek, which requires a wilderness permit from the National Park Service. Call (559) 565-3766 for more information. The journey from the eastern trailheads takes one to two days and requires a permit from the U.S. Forest Service, reachable at (760) 873-2483.

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268.1 feet tall and 107.5 feet around, was discovered by Joseph Hardin Thomas in 1862 and named by Lucretia P. Baker in 1867 to honor Ulysses S. Grant. While still a youngster at 1,800 to 2,000 years old, the beautiful behemoth is the star attraction of a grove of 2,000 to 3,000-year-old sequoias. The General Grant tree is called “The Nation’s Christmas Tree,” and the town of Sanger, California, hosts a special Yuletide celebration under its snow-laden branches every year.

KINGS CANYON & THE KINGS RIVER

“A rival to the Yosemite,” wrote Muir, describing the glacial canyon of the South Fork of the mighty Kings River. It is an awe-inspiring sight to behold the white water of this wild river as it rushes between steep canyon walls. On the 30-mile drive along Highway 180 from Grant Grove to Cedar Grove, stop at Junction View Vista Point, where you can look down at the confluence

of the Middle and South forks of the Kings River. Continuing from there, you enter the narrow, river-carved canyon of the South Fork at Horseshoe Bend, just before reaching Boyden Cave. This stretch of road is outside the parks in Sequoia National Forest. A few miles past Boyden Cave, the canyon becomes much deeper and wider as you enter the glacial-carved section at Cedar Grove in Kings Canyon National Park. The road is generally closed from November to April.

PANORAMIC POINT

At Grant Grove Village, you can take a steep and narrow 2.5-mile road that snakes east to Panoramic Point. From the parking area, take the 0.25-mile trail to the 7,520-foot ridge. The view is a magnificent stretch of the High Sierra. You can see Hume Lake in Sequoia National Forest and, just beyond a low ridge behind the lake, Kings Canyon. No RVs or trailers are permitted.



THINGS TO DO

Throughout the year, you can enjoy numerous park activities from nature walks and horseback riding to cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and scenic drives.



SPRING, SUMMER & FALL

Spring brings flowering redbud, buck-eye and laurel to the foothills. Waterfalls and rivers are at their highest levels. Wispy fog often rolls through the forest canopy at this time. In the high country, ice and snow are just beginning to melt and the air is so thin and dry that the sky appears almost purple.

Summer is the busiest time of year in the parks for both people and animals. You’ll find high-country meadows brimming with vibrant wildflowers throughout the season.

Fall is equally colorful, with oak, dogwood, aspen and other trees turning gold, scarlet and amber. The days are still warm, but the nights are cool—ideal for hiking and backpacking. Fall is typically quiet, yet one of the most beautiful seasons. Snow may fall any time from September to May, or even into June at higher elevations.

PARK PROGRAMS

NPS naturalists offer **talks, films, guided nature and history walks, and evening campfire programs** for adults and children. Programs may range from a star talk program, during which you can enjoy the beauty of the Sierra night sky, to a

giant sequoia walk at the General Sherman and General Grant trees. Consult the park bulletin boards or check online at [nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/rangerprogsched.htm](https://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/rangerprogsched.htm) for times and topics. In the winter, free snowshoe walks may be available.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

The Sequoia Field Institute (SFI) sponsors a program of natural history field seminars called EdVentures. **Classes** are taught by knowledgeable instructors. Subjects include backpacking, creative arts, natural history and winter sports. Participants may be responsible for their own personal transportation, food, equipment or lodging. Custom programs and naturalist guides are also available. For more information, contact the Sequoia Parks Conservancy at 47050 Generals Highway #10, Three Rivers, CA 93271; pick up a catalog at any park visitor center; call (559) 565-4251; or visit [sequoiaparksconservancy.org](https://www.sequoiaparksconservancy.org).

FISHING

Anglers can try their luck fishing in the parks’ many lakes, streams and rivers. Anglers age 16 and older need a **California fishing license**, available for purchase at the Hume Lake Store. Tackle is available at Grant Grove and Cedar Grove markets, and at numerous locations outside the parks.

State fishing regulations apply to all areas within the parks. The fishing season is open all year in the Kaweah drainage; for most of the remainder of the parks, the trout season is from the last Saturday in April through November 15. Check at visitor centers for specific regulations regarding open and closed waters for fishing.

WALKING & HIKING

Please see the “Walking & Hiking” chapter for more information.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Horses are available for **riding** at the Cedar Grove pack station and at Grant Grove stables in Kings Canyon. The concessioner-operated pack stations offer hourly, half-day and day rides, as well as extended overnight-guided trips into the wilderness/backcountry. The stables provide day rides only. The minimum age limit to ride may vary. Reservations are highly recommended. Availability depends on weather conditions. Please call the **Cedar Grove** pack station at (559) 565-3464 and **Grant Grove** stables at (559) 335-9292. For more information, visit nps.gov/seki.



SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS' DARK SKY FESTIVAL

July 21, 22 and 23, 2017, marks the third annual Dark Sky Festival at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Aiming to educate visitors about this important park resource, the three-evening event features constellation tours, telescope viewings, solar observations, astronaut speakers, nature walks, photography presentations and much more.

This scheduled festival reminds us how special dark skies truly are, as they have become a rarity on our planet. With over half the world population living in urbanized areas, “light pollution”—the introduction of artificial light, either directly or indirectly, into the natural environment—is a mounting concern. Due mostly to sky glow (brightening of the night sky from human-caused light scattered in the atmosphere) and glare (the direct shining of light), even a small amount

WILDLIFE WATCHING

During the spring, summer and fall you can see many types of animals. In spring, the meadows filled with snow runoff become ponds for a chorus of frogs. The blue-gray scrub jay, which screeches at anything that moves, and the California towhee, which sings an accelerating series of high “teek” notes, are found at lower elevations. The Steller’s jay, with a black head and blue body, is commonly seen flying through campgrounds and picnic areas at higher elevations. You will hear chipmunks and ground squirrels chatter and see them dash across the forest floor. If you are lucky, you may even glimpse mule deer feeding at dusk, gray fox hunting in the foothills or possibly even bear lumbering through the forest. Please do not feed any wildlife.



WINTER

Entry roads are plowed and kept open from Highway 180 to Grant Grove and from Highway 198 to Wuksachi Lodge, weather permitting. The Generals Highway between Wuksachi and Grant Grove may be closed during the winter. For updates, call (559) 565-3341. Roads to Cedar Grove in Kings Canyon and Mineral King in Sequoia are closed in winter. Tire chains may be required at any time of the year, but generally between October and June. Visitor centers are open daily at Ash Mountain, Grant Grove and Giant Forest Museum. The Lodgepole Visitor Center is closed during winter. Concession facilities are available at Wuksachi and Grant Grove year-round.

PARK PROGRAMS

Naturalist programs may be given on weekends during winter. For details, visit nps.gov/seki or check park bulletin boards for dates and times.

Park rangers may also offer **snowshoe nature walks** on weekends for up to 18 people, weather conditions permitting. If you’ve never tried this invigorating activity, it’s a great way to learn about the parks’ winter transformation. It’s easy to learn how to walk with snowshoes, which enable you to access areas where you’d otherwise sink up to your hips in snow. Walks average about two hours, cover one or two miles and are not recommended for children under 10. Snowshoes are provided. For more information, call (559) 565-3341.

WINTER SPORTS

From December to April, the parks may be covered in a mantle of snow up

Jeff Gunn



The red bark of the park’s giant trees is even more striking against the snow.

to four- to-six feet deep. When this happens, skis and snowshoes replace hiking boots. Winter activities in the Giant Forest and Grant Grove areas include **cross-country skiing** and **snowshoeing**. There are approximately 70 miles of marked cross-country trails in the parks. Rental equipment (including snowshoes) are available for participants of all ages. For more information on cross-country skiing, sledding or snowshoeing in Grant Grove, please call (559) 565-4307; for Giant Forest, call (559) 565-4480. Kids may be able to sled and play in the snow-play areas



The Milky Way, clearly visible over Sequoia National Park.

of light can impact human perception of the night sky, natural landscape and other faint features of the night. As the human eye cannot fully dark-adapt, the more light there is at night the less we can see.

Set aside time to visit a national park or other remote location less affected by manmade light sources to get a feel for the intricate world over our heads.

For information on the Dark Sky Festival, visit exploresequoiakingscanyon.com

NPS

SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOURS: EDITOR'S PICKS

If time is limited, self-guiding walks are a great way to explore the parks in spring, summer and fall. Most have interpretive signs explaining the natural history of the area.

Hazelwood Nature Trail, Giant Forest is an easy, one-mile loop hike that takes about one hour. The trail features excellent stands of giant sequoias. Trailside exhibits tell about the relationship of the trees to fire and to humans.

Cold Springs Nature Trail, Mineral King is a one-mile, 45-minute walk that in summer shows off wildflowers and birds. From the east end of Cold Springs Campground, walk along the East Fork of the Kaweah River and under the leafy shade of cottonwoods and aspens. Exhibits point out native plant life, including red and white firs, gooseberry bushes, junipers and willows. The area is open through mid-fall, weather permitting.

Big Trees Trail is a 1.5-mile, one-hour loop nature trail that starts at the Giant Forest Museum and circles the lovely Round Meadow. Trailside exhibits explore the factors that make this area prime sequoia habitat. 🚰

near Big Stump, Columbine and Wolverton. Note: Winter barbecuing is allowed in designated picnic areas only.

The Sequoia Parks Conservancy operates the high-country **Pear Lake Winter Hut** for advanced wilderness/backcountry cross-country skiers and snowshoers. The cabin can accommodate 10 people. Use of the facility, open from approximately mid-December to late April, is by reservation.

The trail to the hut begins at Wolverton (2.5 miles south of Lodgepole) and from there it is a strenuous six-mile overland trek. Contact: Sequoia Parks Conservancy, Attn: Pear Lake, 47050 Generals Highway #10, Three Rivers, CA 93271; or visit exploresequoiakingscanyon.com/pear-lake-winter-hut.html for information and availability. Cooking utensils, a wood pellet-burning heater, propane-operated lanterns and a stove are provided. **Note:** *Guests must be prepared for avalanche conditions and pack in their own sleeping*

bags, propane, food and water purification supplies. Advanced wilderness/backcountry skills are required.

WILDLIFE WATCHING

In winter, **black bears** are in a deep sleep at higher elevations, but a few may be active at lower levels. **Mule deer** move to the valleys to forage and avoid the snow. The **white-tailed jackrabbit**—which is really a hare—and the **deer mouse** are primarily nocturnal, so you'll only see their tracks in the snow. You may spot **raccoons** on the prowl for food, or a **chickaree** looking for stored cones. The **Steller's jay**, the only western jay with a crest, and the **raven**, a raucous, glossy black bird, are other common winter inhabitants. Four little birds also flock together hunting for insects in the trees: the **mountain chickadee**, the **golden-crowned kinglet**, the **brown creeper** and the **red-breasted nuthatch**. **Coyotes** remain active. Do not feed the animals!

Clockwise from top left: instanev/Stock; NetaDegany/Stock; Joel Henner; surpasspra/Stock; yenwen/Stock; NPS



Clockwise from top left: Winter conditions won't prevent you from exploring the park's trails; A child photographs a sequoia; Snow covers the mountains above Seville Lake; Hiking along a fallen redwood; Heavy snow blankets the park; Spot southern mountain yellow-legged frogs.



LODGING & DINING

A range of comfortable accommodations are available in and around Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Advance reservations for lodging are strongly recommended, especially during summer and holidays. All major credit cards and traveler's checks are accepted. In Sequoia and Kings Canyon, dining options range from deli and to-go items, perfect for picnicking, to sit-down dinners in dining rooms with stunning views of the park. Lodging and dining is also available outside the park. For information, contact these chambers of commerce: **Sequoia Foothills:** (559) 561-3300, threerivers.com; **Exeter:** (559) 592-2919, exeterchamber.com; **Visalia:** (559) 734-5876, visaliachamber.org; **Sanger:** (559) 875-4575, sanger.org; **Fresno:** (559) 495-4800, fresnochamber.com; **Central Sierra:** (559) 336-9076, centralsierrachamber.org; as well as the **Sequoia Tourism Council:** discoverthesequoias.com.



SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK

☘ **WUKSACHI LODGE** Guest rooms are located in three detached buildings near this beautiful cedar and stone lodge, with views of Mount Silliman and Silver Peak in the High Sierra. **Amenities** include 102 spacious guest rooms, full-service restaurant, cocktail lounge, retail and ski shop, conference facilities. Rooms have phones, flat screen TVs, Wi-Fi, private baths

and more. Call (866) 807-3598 or visit visitsequoiakingscanyon.com/stay.

THE PEAKS RESTAURANT has soaring glass windows, offering beautiful views of the mountains. The menu features American and regional Sierra alpine cuisine. Call (559) 565-4070 or visit visitsequoia.com/the-peaks-restaurant.aspx. @L@D

BEARPAW HIGH SIERRA CAMP This wilderness/backcountry tent hotel is available for up to 18 hikers and is located 11.5 miles from Crescent Meadow via the High Sierra Trail. The tents have wooden floors, canvas siding and two twin beds. Open from mid-June to mid-September, weather permitting. Reservations are required and are accepted by phone only, starting January 2. **Amenities** include bedding, towels, linens, homestyle meals, showers and flush toilets. The camp provides family-style meals for guests during summer only. @L@D ☒ Call (866) 807-3598 or visit visitsequoiakingscanyon.com/stay.

LODGEPOLE MARKET CENTER Here you'll find a grocery store, the Watchtower Deli and the Harrison Grill—all perfect for on-the-go meals and picnic items. Open year-round. Visit visitsequoia.com/lodgepole-market-center.aspx. @L@D



MORE SIERRA ADVENTURES

Discover tons of outdoor fun for the whole family and everything else the Eastern Sierra has to offer with a visit to Mammoth Lakes. Enjoy the 360° views from 11,053 ft. when you book the Stay & Gondola Package – available at all Mammoth Lodging Collection properties.

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KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Lodging and dining are available in two locations in Kings Canyon National Park:

Grant Grove Village lies within 1.5 miles round-trip walking distance of the Grant Grove of Giant Sequoias and the General Grant Tree. Originally part of General Grant National Park, established in 1890, it was a popular camping site for early visitors to the Big Trees. Here you'll find the Kings Canyon Visitor Center. Free ranger-led programs are offered during summer. There is no gasoline at Grant Grove, but it can be found at Hume Lake (year-round) and Stony Creek Village (summer only).

Cedar Grove provides a quieter setting and is located on the Kings River, deep in the heart of Kings Canyon. The Cedar Grove Visitor Center is open late May to early September and offers exhibits, books, maps and first aid. Free ranger-led programs are offered in summer. The Roads End Wilderness Permit Station, six miles down the road, distributes wilderness permits. Maps and bear canisters are also available here.

Nearby sights to see include Canyon Viewpoint, Knapp's Cabin, Mist Falls, Roaring River Falls and Zumwalt Meadow.

JOHN MUIR LODGE Located in Grant Grove Village, this lodge offers renovated rooms with mountain décor. Guests also have access to balconies with outdoor seating and a forest view.

Amenities include the village gift shop, market and post office. The lobby features a stone fireplace and is a great gathering place for games and conversation. Call (866) 807-3598 or visit visitsequoiakingscanyon.com/stay.

GRANT GROVE VILLAGE RESTAURANT Due to a new 8,000 square-foot restaurant—featuring a fully modern kitchen and a beautiful dining room—being built, anticipate limited food service through mid-summer 2017. Grant Grove dining options during construction include grab-and-go meals from the Grant Grove Market; a themed food truck; or traveling 45 minutes to Peaks Restaurant at Wuksachi Lodge. Call (559) 335-5500 or visit visitsequoia.com/Grant-Grove-Restaurant.aspx.

GRANT GROVE CABINS Nine of these historic, rustic cabins with private baths are open year-round. Twenty-four cabins and 17 tent cabins, with a central bathhouse, are available in summer. **Amenities** include cabins that can accommodate up to four people in two double beds. Additional beds are available. The village has a restaurant, gift shop, market and post office. Call (866) 807-3598 or visit visitsequoiakingscanyon.com/stay.

CEDAR GROVE LODGE This small, quiet lodge in Cedar Grove Village offers motel rooms from early May to mid-October. **Amenities** include 18 standard hotel rooms and three additional rooms offering an outdoor patio near the river. The lodge has a gift shop, ATM, snack bar and market. Showers and laundry facilities are nearby. Call (866) 807-3598 or visit visitsequoiakingscanyon.com/stay

CEDAR GROVE SNACK BAR This counter-service restaurant, located in the lodge registration building, offers light meals and snacks, and has both indoor and outdoor seating. Visit visitsequoia.com/Cedar-Grove-Snack-Bar.aspx.

STONY CREEK LODGE RESTAURANT Enjoy casual dining and pizza inside or on the patio.

MONTECITO SEQUOIA LODGE & SUMMER FAMILY CAMP Located in Sequoia National Forest on Generals Highway, 10 miles south of Grant Grove, this award-winning family-oriented resort offers packages that include lodging, meals and activities. **Amenities** include lodge buildings with rooms with private baths. Winterized cabins have nearby bathhouses. Swimming pool. Buffet-style meals are included in the room rate. Call (800) 227-9900 or visit mslodge.com.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

There are many other lodging options in Three Rivers adjacent to the south entrance to the park and in Fresno and Visalia.



OUTSIDE THE PARKS

STONY CREEK LODGE Located in Sequoia National Forest on the Generals Highway between Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, this quaint lodge offers 12 motel rooms with private baths. **Amenities** include a lodge, constructed of river rock and timber, which has a stone fireplace, gift shop, market, ATM and gas station. Call (877) 828-1440 or visit sequoia-kingscanyon.com.



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2. Carson  or Luther  passes via  / 
3. Via Bakersfield:  /  / 



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WALKING & HIKING

Whether you're a casual day hiker, backpacker or determined mountaineer headed for the summit of Mount Whitney, there's a trail for you.

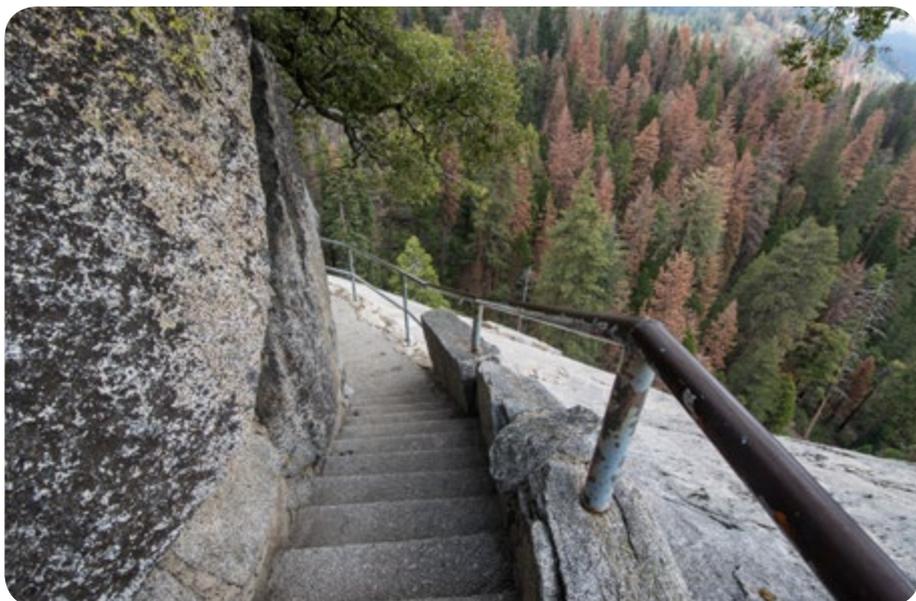
More than 800 miles of marked trails may be accessed from 25 trailheads across the parks. Trails below 10,000 feet are normally snow-free by midsummer. Please see the "Park Regulations & Safety" and "Camping" chapters for more details about obtaining wilderness/backcountry permits. For maps, trail conditions and other information, stop at any visitor center.

HIKING SAFETY TIPS

• **Don't overexert yourself** in the effort to view park sights. Several hikes, especially in the high, thin air of the parks' wilderness/backcountry, can be quite

challenging, especially for backpackers with heart or respiratory problems.

- To prevent **blisters**, the most common ailment on the trail, wear comfortable shoes or boots that suit your needs and the terrain. Likewise, choose quality outdoor socks that will cushion and protect your feet.
- **Leave a copy of your itinerary** with a reliable person. Include such details as the make, year and license plate of your car, the equipment you're bringing, your destination, the weather you anticipate and when you plan to return.
- It's safest to **hike or camp with at least one companion**. If you'll be entering a remote area, your group should have a minimum of four people; this way, if one is



Descend the stairs of the Moro Rock Trail. But step carefully! It's steep.

m01229

The official non-profit partner in Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks.

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Park Improvement Projects
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Dark Sky Festival - July 21, 22, 23
Find Adventure Food Truck Fest - Oct 7



KINGS CANYON TRAILS

Trail	Description	Round-Trip Distance	Difficulty
Trailhead		Time	Elevation Gain
GRANT GROVE AREA			
General Grant Tree Trail <i>Grant Tree parking area</i>	Interpretive signs on this paved trail describe the forest features on this pleasant walk to the General Grant Tree. A pamphlet is available for a small charge at visitor centers. (Partial accessibility) ⚠	0.3 mile <i>30 minutes</i>	easy <i>50 feet</i>
North Grove Loop <i>end of lower Grant Tree parking area</i>	Travel through groves of giant sequoia, sugar pine, white fir and dogwood. Sequoias thrive in the wet meadow and a large dead sequoia shows fire marks.	1.5 miles <i>1 hour</i>	moderate <i>400 feet</i>
Big Stump Trail <i>picnic area near Kings Canyon's Big Stump entrance</i>	The trail traverses an area cut for timber in the 1880s, when early lumberjacks threatened to eliminate giant sequoias. Huge sequoia stumps are still visible.	1 mile <i>1 hour</i>	easy <i>300 feet</i>
Park Ridge Trail <i>Panoramic Point parking area (2.5 miles east of Grant Grove Village. No vehicles in winter.)</i>	Walk south along the ridge for stunning vistas. On a clear day, you can see Hume Lake in Sequoia National Forest, San Joaquin Valley and Coast Range 100 miles away. Return via the dirt fire road or retrace your steps.	4.7 miles <i>3 hours</i>	easy <i>200 feet</i>
Sunset Trail <i>across the road from Grant Grove Visitor Center</i>	This trail provides views of forest, rocks, streams, two waterfalls and a lake. It also passes Viola Falls and the old park entrance near Camp Redwood.	6 miles <i>3.5 hours</i>	fairly strenuous <i>1,400 feet</i>
CEDAR GROVE AREA			
Zumwalt Meadow <i>Zumwalt Meadow parking area, one mile before Roads End</i>	The trail provides scenic views of the meadow, which was named for D. K. Zumwalt, a railway attorney who was instrumental in saving the area. (Partial accessibility) ⚠	1.5 miles <i>1 hour</i>	easy <i>50 feet</i>
Mist Falls-Paradise Valley Trail <i>Roads End short-term parking area</i>	This popular backpacking trail is named for its two main destinations. You can head back after reaching Mist Falls (4 mi.) or continue on to Paradise Valley (6.5 mi.).	9-13 miles <i>5-8 hours</i>	moderately strenuous <i>1,500 feet</i>

hurt, another can stay with the victim while two go for help. If you'll be going into an area that is unfamiliar to you, take along someone who knows the area or speak with those who do before you set out.

- **Lightning** can be a special danger during sudden summer storms. Hikers are warned against climbing to any heights, such as Moro Rock, if a storm is expected.
- **Snow and ice** may delay use of the higher wilderness/backcountry trails, and stream crossings may be hazardous into July or later. Occasional trail closures may occur due to fire activity.
- Review the equipment, supplies and skills that you'll need. Always remember to **carry extra food and water** in case of an emergency.
- Always maintain a safe distance of 100 yards minimum between your group

Oh, Ranger! FUN FACTS

Q. ARE THERE ANY TRAILS THAT ARE OPEN YEAR-ROUND?



A. Yes. Many trails—including Marble Falls, Middle Fork, Ladybug and Garfield Grove—are open year-round. Autumn brings cooler temperatures for hiking and, in spring, the foothills are clothed in a glorious array of wildflowers. Ask at a park visitor center for up-to-date trail information.

For answers to all your questions, go to **OhRanger.com**



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SEQUOIA TRAILS

Trail <i>Trailhead</i>	Description	Round-Trip Distance <i>Time</i>	Difficulty <i>Elevation Gain</i>
GIANT FOREST AREA			
CONGRESS TRAIL <i>General Sherman Tree</i>	Popular paved loop through the heart of Giant Forest Grove and into Alta Plateau, home to the giant President, Chief Sequoyah, General Lee and McKinley trees.	2 miles <i>1.5 hours</i>	easy <i>200 feet</i>
Big Trees Trail <i>Giant Forest Museum or museum parking lot</i>	This self-guided paved trail is graded for accessibility. It circles Round Meadow and features trail-side exhibits about the sequoia habitat. †	1.5 miles <i>1 hour</i>	easy <i>60 feet</i>
Crescent Meadow/Log Meadow Loop <i>Crescent Meadow parking lot / picnic area</i>	If you follow the signs for Tharp's Log, you will see meadows, giant sequoias, the park's oldest cabin, dense fir forest and wildflowers (when they are in season).	1.8 miles <i>2 hours</i>	easy <i>200 feet</i>
Moro Rock/ Soldiers Trail Loop <i>Moro Rock</i>	Climb 400 steps up Moro Rock, a huge granite dome, for views of the Great Western Divide. Trail passes Roosevelt Tree, Triple Tree, Tunnel Log and historic Soldiers Camp.	4.6 miles <i>3 hours</i>	moderately difficult <i>300 feet</i>
MINERAL KING AREA			
<i>Hikers must drive to reach the Mineral King trails. The drive over the 25-mile winding road takes about 1.5 hours from Highway 198 in Three Rivers.</i>			
Eagle Lake Trail <i>Eagle-Mosquito parking area</i>	Gentle incline becomes steep near Spring Creek, where great views can be had. At Eagle Sink Hole, where flowing water disappears into the ground, turn around or continue for 1.5 miles to Eagle Lake.	6.8 miles <i>4 hours</i>	moderately difficult <i>2,170 feet</i>



CAMPING

Over 1,200 campsites—1,168 regular sites (1–6 people), 26 medium group sites (7–19 people) and 11 large group sites (12–50 people)—are located in the parks. Many campgrounds are near visitor centers, which offer interpretive exhibits and prompt first aid if needed. Several sites are shaded by evergreens in the thick conifer forests, while others lie in the oak and chaparral covered foothills.

FACILITIES

Most campgrounds have tables, fire grills, bear-proof food storage boxes, drinking water, garbage cans and either flush or pit toilets. Parking for extra vehicles is available nearby. Showers may or may not be available to the visitors in the campgrounds, depending upon construction.

ACCESSIBILITY †

A limited number of accessible campsites are available. For details about ac-

cessible facilities, visit [nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm](https://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm). Contact the nearest visitor center or call the park at (559) 565-3341 for more information.

REGULATIONS

All food **must** be stored in bear-proof boxes where provided. Digging or leveling ground is not permitted. Wildlife and vegetation may not be disturbed. Pets must be leashed at all times. Only dead and downed wood may be used for fires. Bicycles and pets are not permitted on trails. Music should be audible only in your campsite. Check bulletin boards for quiet hours and further information.

RESERVATIONS

Individual campsites at Lodgepole, Dorst Creek, Potwisha and Buckeye Flat campgrounds may be reserved in Sequoia National Park and at Sunset Campground in Kings Canyon National Park. Group

bjdizx/istock



The parks have 13 campgrounds, most of which are first-come, first-served.

CAMPGROUNDS										
Campground	Months of Operation	Fee Per Night	Individual Sites	Group Sites	Reservations in Summer	Toilets	Drinking Water	Trailers and RVs	Showers	Camp Store
SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK										
Giant Forest/Lodgepole Area (Elevation 6,700')										
Dorst Creek	Summer	\$22	218	4	•	Flush	•	•	•	
Lodgepole	Summer	\$22	214		•	Flush	•	•	•	•
Foothills Area (Elevation 2,100' – 3,600')										
Buckeye Flat	Spring – Fall	\$22	28		•	Flush	•			
Potwisha	All Year	\$22	42		•	Flush	•	•		
South Fork	All Year	\$12	10			Vault	Part Year	•		
Mineral King Area (Elevation 6,550' – 7,500')										
Atwell Mill	Summer	\$12	21			Vault	•		•	
Cold Springs	Summer	\$12	40			Vault	•		•	
KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK										
Grant Grove Area (Elevation 6,500')										
Azalea	All Year	\$18	110			Flush	•	•	•	•
Crystal Springs	Part Summer	\$18	36	14		Flush	•	•	•	•
Sunset	Summer	\$22–\$50	157	2		Flush	•	•	•	•
Cedar Grove Area (Elevation 4,600')										
Sheep Creek	Summer	\$18	111			Flush	•	•	•	•
Sentinel	Part Summer	\$18	82			Flush	•	•	•	•
Canyon View	Part Summer	\$40–\$60		16		Flush	•		•	•
Moraine	Summer	\$18	120			Flush	•	•	•	•

For details about accessible facilities, please visit [nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm](https://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm).

sites in Kings Canyon available by reservation are Sunset, Sentinel and Canyon View, and mid-sized group sites in Crystal Springs. To make reservations, please call (877) 444-6777 or visit [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

RESTRICTIONS

Camping is available on a first-come, first-served basis at most sites and is limited to 14 days from mid-June to mid-September, with 30 days total per year. Most campgrounds permit a maximum of one vehicle, two tents and six people per campsite.

WILDERNESS/BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING

Wilderness/backcountry camping permits are available year-round at permit stations in Foothills and Grant Grove. During the winter, obtain permits at the Giant Forest Museum. And in summer, pick up a permit at Lodgepole May 26 through September 23. Wilderness/backcountry camping permits are available on a quota system and cost \$10

per permit plus \$5 per person between May 27 to September 24, 2017. **Bear-resistant food canisters** are strongly recommended in all areas and required in others. They are available for rent or purchase at concession markets or visitor centers throughout the park. For complete camping information, call (559) 565-3341 or visit [nps.gov/seki](https://www.nps.gov/seki).

RVS & TRAILERS

Most campgrounds permit RVs and trailers, but site size varies and many sites are not suitable for long RVs. Only a few sites will accommodate RVs and trailers longer than 30 feet. However, your most direct route to the campground may not allow for more than a 22-foot length limit. For information on RV camping outside of the parks, visit [gocampingamerica.com](https://www.gocampingamerica.com).

Oh, Ranger!

FUN FACTS

Q. IS IT HARD TO GET A CAMPING SPOT IN SUMMER?



A. Campgrounds often fill on weekends. Sunday afternoons through Friday afternoons offer the best chance of finding a campsite.

For answers to all your questions, go to [OhRanger.com](https://www.OhRanger.com)

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Sequoia and Kings Canyon country has a rich assortment of plant and animal life.

The rolling foothills are home to **California black oak**, **mariposa manzanita**, **chaparral pea** and **yucca**. Wildflowers, such as lupine, splash the hills with color in spring.

The mixed-conifer forest boasts the mighty **sequoia**, **incense cedar**, **various pines** and **white fir**. **Ferns**, **mosses** and **mushrooms** also flourish.

The high country is a land of lakes, meadows, open forest and bare granite. **Foxtail pine** and **white-bark pine** are two of the few trees that survive at these heights.

The park also teems with a variety of animal life, including **mountain lions**, **coyotes**, **weasels**, **badgers**, **mule deer** and **skunks**, several types of rodents (including **Douglas squirrels** and **yellow-bellied marmots**) and various **snakes** (including the two-foot-long **rubber boa**, which looks like an overgrown earthworm).

The evergreen forests also provide a home for nearly 216 species of birds. The **Clark's nutcracker** is a light-gray, crow-like bird with black wings and tail. It feeds on the seeds found in pinecones, which it stashes in hiding places. Closely related to the blue jay, **Steller's Jay** are also a common site.



MOUNTAIN LIONS

Mountain lions serve an important role in the park ecosystem because they prevent the over-population of deer and other small mammals. Generally, these big cats are calm, quiet and elusive. Sightings are rare, so if you spot one, consider yourself privileged!

A mountain lion attack is extremely unlikely. However, to increase your safety, follow these suggestions:

- Watch children closely. Never let them run ahead or lag behind on the trail. Talk to children about lions and teach them what to do if they meet one.
- Avoid hiking or walking alone.
- Store food per park regulations.
- Do not leave pets or pet food outside or in a vehicle and unattended, especially at night. Pets attract mountain lions into developed areas.
- Never approach a lion, especially one that is feeding or with kittens. Most lions will try to avoid a confrontation, so always give them a way to escape.
- Don't run. Stay calm. Hold your



Mountain lions help control the population of deer and other animals.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife

- ground or back away slowly. Face the lion and stand upright. Do all you can to appear larger: Grab a stick, raise your arms, open your jacket and spread it as wide as you can above your head. And, if you have small children with you, pick them up.
- Wave your arms, shout and throw objects to convince the lion that you are not prey and may be dangerous.
- If attacked, fight back!



WATCHABLE WILDLIFE



1 STELLER'S JAY (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)

A close relative of the blue jay, the Steller's Jay is the only crested jay found west of the Rocky Mountains. They live in flocks of 10 or more birds, and are known for their varied vocalizations, the most common of which sounds exactly like an old-fashioned pump handle. • **Weight** 3–5 oz. • **Size** 11–14 in. long • **Active** year-round. *Photo Credit: Old Mister Crow*

2 BOBCAT (*Lynx rufus*)

This wide-faced feline is recognizable by the tufts of hair below its pointy, black-tipped ears and its stubby, or bobbed, tail. Bobcats travel extensively—territory can exceed 125 square miles—in search of prey, like rodents or deer. They are most active at twilight and dawn. • **Weight** 8–24 lbs. • **Size** 20–35 in. long • **Active** year-round. *Photo Credit: R. Runtsch*

3 CALIFORNIA MULE DEER (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

These deer are most active at dawn and dusk. Their large, mule-like ears are like a satellite dish, collecting noises and alerting them of danger. Mule deer are capable of moving with great speed over rough terrain by taking bounding leaps and landing on all fours simultaneously. • **Weight** 70–475 lbs. • **Size** 4–7.5 ft. long • **Active** year-round. *Photo Credit: Yuval Helfman*

4 CHICKAREE (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*)

The chickaree, also known as the Douglas squirrel, primarily eats the seeds of coniferous trees, in addition to berries, mushrooms and even some birds' eggs. Chickarees hoard food in one location, discarding the scales of pinecones as they eat the seeds. A pile of scales can grow to more than a meter across. • **Weight** 5–11 oz. • **Size** approx. 30 cm. long • **Active** year-round. *Photo Credit: Eric Sonstroem*

5 DIPPER (*Cinclus mexicanus*)

The dipper, or water ouzel, is a stocky, slate-gray bird with yellow feet. It sits on rocks in the middle of streams and bobs up and down, then dives into the water in search of insects or larvae. It catches prey by swimming or walking along stream bottoms. • **Weight** 1–3 oz. • **Size** 6–8 in. long • **Active** year-round

6 WESTERN RATTLESNAKE (*Crotalus viridis*)

The sound of a rattle announces the presence of this venomous reptile. Heat-sensitive sensory organs on the sides of its head allow this viper to locate and strike prey with incredible accuracy. Adults eat small mammals, while juveniles prefer lizards and mice. • **Weight** 2–10 lbs. • **Size** 16–64 in. long • **Active** spring through fall. *Photo Credit: Tavi Photo*

SEQUOIA VS. REDWOOD: COMPARING TWO TREES

Fossil remains show that ancestors of the redwood family of trees grew worldwide at least 175 million years ago. The Ice Age, however, wiped out most of them. California is lucky enough to have two types of these unusual trees.

The **Giant Sequoia** (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), found in Sequoia and Kings Canyon, is also called “Sierra redwood” or the “Big Tree.” It has a column-like trunk, stout branches and fibrous, reddish-brown bark.

This stately evergreen is one of the oldest living trees on Earth. Because of ideal growing conditions (mild, wet winters and dry, warm summers), it is also one of the fastest-growing trees.

Its dense bark, sometimes two feet thick, is the sequoia’s main defense. It is virtually impervious to brush fires and insect invasions.

Giant sequoias only grow naturally on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada. You’ll find them in over 70 locations, including 36 groves in Sequoia and Kings Canyon and three in Yosemite National Park. They also grow in Sequoia National Forest and a few other isolated spots. Of the world’s 37 largest sequoias, 21 are giant sequoias growing in Sequoia and Kings Canyon.



The taller and more slender **California Coast Redwood** (*Sequoia sempervirens*) is more conifer-like in profile. It has a large base and reddish-brown bark. Coast redwoods often grow to be taller than sequoias. Redwoods can reach up to about 370 feet, while sequoias rarely top 300 feet.

The California coast redwoods naturally grow in a narrow band along the coast of California and Oregon, where fog provides moisture to the growing trees. They also need abundant winter rain and moderate year-round temperatures.

The world’s first-, second-, third- and sixth-tallest trees are redwoods. They grow within a mile of each other on Redwood Creek along the northern California coast. You’ll find them at Humboldt Redwoods State Park, Redwood National and State Parks, and Big Basin Redwoods State Park, all in California.



GIANT SEQUOIA		CALIFORNIA COAST REDWOOD	
To 311 feet	Height	To 367.8 feet	
To 3,200 years	Age	To 2,000 years	
To 2.7 million lbs.	Weight	To 1.6 million lbs.	
To 31 in. thick	Bark	To 12 in. thick	
To 8 ft. diameter	Branches	To 5 ft. diameter	
To 40 ft. diameter	Bases	To 22 ft. diameter	
By seed only	Reproduce	By seed or root sprout	
As large as oat flakes	Seed Size	As large as tomato seeds	
Shaped like a chicken’s egg	Cones	Shaped like a large olive	
Small, overlapping, awl-shaped needles	Foliage	Single needles that fall off in sprays	



BEARS

Jitze Couperus



Black bears are the only species of bear found in the parks.

While their color may vary from black to cinnamon to blond, all bears found in the park are black bears (*Ursus americanus*). The typical adult male weighs about 250–300 pounds and adult females can weigh in at 150–200 pounds. When standing upright, an adult bear can be up to five feet tall. Black bears are the largest Sierran predator, but only a small percentage of their natural diet is meat. They are omnivores, feeding mostly on plants and insects.

Bears are most active in spring and summer and, even if you don’t catch a glimpse of one, you will likely find signs of them. Look for claw scratches on tree trunks, which indicate a place where a bear has marked its territory. You may also see bear tracks and droppings, or rocks they have moved while hunting for grubs.

Black bears have a keen sense of smell, are highly intelligent and excellent learners. They are opportunistic feeders and will seek out food wherever it can be easily found. You can stay safe in bear country and help keep bears wild and alive by following these food storage and safety tips.

FOOD STORAGE

Bears can cause severe property damage while trying to get to people’s food. Park regulations require proper storage of food to prevent bears from getting it. “Food” is considered any item with a scent, including canned goods, bottles, drinks, soap, cosmetics, toiletries, trash, ice chests (even when empty) and unwashed food items or utensils.

- Never leave food or scented items in cars.
- Store all food and anything with an odor (including toiletries) in bear-proof food-storage lockers where provided.
- Keep a clean camp and deposit garbage in trash cans or dumpsters.
- When camping, hiking or picnicking, always keep food within arms reach and never leave it unattended.
- Always stay with your food and treat your food locker like a refrigerator—keep it closed unless you’re actively putting food in or taking food out.
- When backpacking, use an approved bear resistant food canister.

SAFETY TIPS

- If you see a bear in a developed area (like a campground or parking lot), make as much noise as possible by yelling or banging pots and pans together to scare it away. If you see a bear in the wild, stay at least 100 yards away and allow the bear to continue its natural behavior.
- Follow the speed limit. Cars are the most common human-related cause of black bear deaths in the park.
- For more information, visit [nps.gov](https://www.nps.gov).



PRESERVATION

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are better protected, yet more endangered, than ever before.

They are protected by law, by the National Park Service (NPS) and by countless committed citizens. The parks are endangered by the environmental changes caused by visitors to the parks, as well as by the growth of nearby urban centers.

Threats to the park include **air pollution, pesticide drift, drought, global climate change** and **overcrowding**—all threaten the resources of the Sierra.

Ultimately, the fate of the parks will depend on the wisdom and foresight of everyone involved. Please do your part by respecting these valuable natural resources.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Fire management is a tool by which the parks are protected for future generations. For eons, lightning has ignited forest fires, which generally tend to burn in small areas. These recurrent fires used to occur naturally every three to 35 years. Fires can actually offer many benefits to forests. Not only does it eliminate forest floor debris and low-growing competitors, but the ashes also act as a natural fertilizer for new growth. Fire heats sequoia cones and dries out the cone scales, thus releasing seeds to germinate. It also creates openings in the canopy for sunlight to reach seedlings. In this way, sequoias have adapted and survived for thousands of years.

Until the mid-1960s, the NPS “con-

served the scenery” with a policy of total fire suppression. Eventually, the NPS began to research and document the effects of fire on giant sequoia ecology. What they found was that the trees were not reproducing and that fire was necessary for the continued success of the giant sequoia.

In 1968, Sequoia and Kings Canyon instituted a three-pronged fire management plan that was unprecedented in NPS history. The plan called for carefully monitored and prescribed burns to remove logs and tons of other woody litter that accumulate in the forest. In doing so, the small prescribed burns would help prevent large destructive wildfires that explode into roaring infernos when the buildup is too great. The plan also encouraged con-

Oh, Ranger! FUN FACTS

Q. HOW IS POLLUTION AFFECTING SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON?

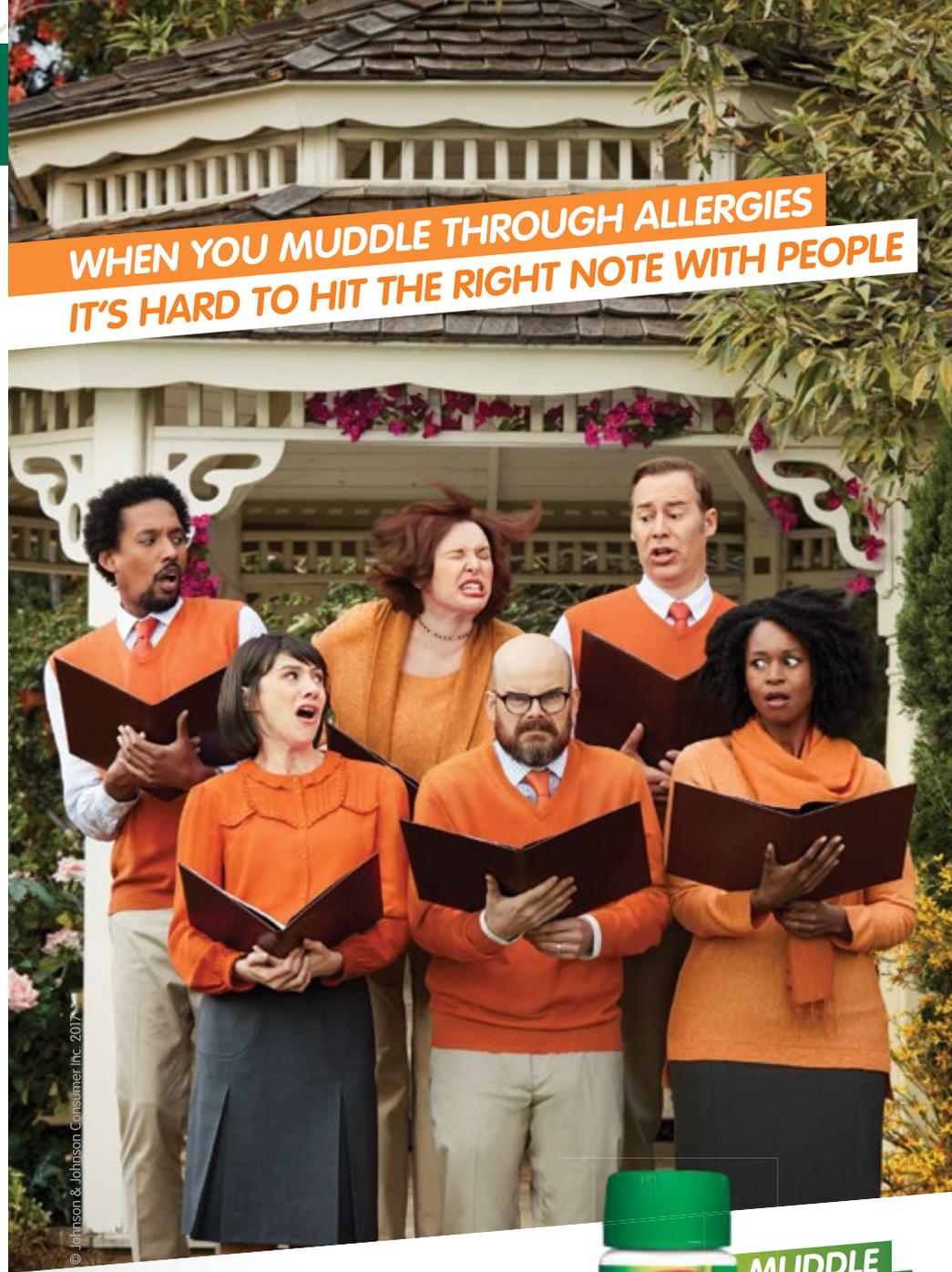


A. Sequoia and Kings Canyon suffer from one of the worst air-pollution problems of any national park! Pollution—particularly ozone—from the Central Valley and the Bay Area is carried into the mountains by warm winds. It challenges all of us to help reduce air-pollution!



For answers to all your questions, go to **OhRanger.com**

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fined natural fires and lightning-caused forest fires to burn for the first time. Fire suppression was the third part of the plan, but with a focus of preventing fires from campgrounds, cigarettes and unwanted naturally caused blazes.

From 1968 through 1989, 156 prescribed burns and 410 natural fires were allowed to burn and clear out the underbrush in the parks. Over the past two decades, scientists have been measuring reproduction before and after the fires and are reporting remarkable regeneration.

If you see a fire in the forest, by all means report it. You may learn, though, that trained crews are actually monitoring the fire as part of the fire management plan.

LIVE LIGHT ON THE LAND

In 1903, only 450 people visited Sequoia and Kings Canyon. Last year, almost 1.7 million visitors came to the

HOW LONG DOES LITTER LAST?	
Glass bottles	1,000,000 YEARS
Aluminum cans	UP TO 100 YEARS
Rubber boot soles	UP TO 80 YEARS
Leather	UP TO 50 YEARS
Nylon fabric	UP TO 40 YEARS
Plastic film containers	UP TO 30 YEARS
Plastic bags	UP TO 20 YEARS
Plastic-coated papers	5 YEARS
Wool socks	UP TO 5 YEARS

parks. To protect these beautiful places, consider using the free in-park shuttle during the busy summer season, or consider making a reservation on the Sequoia Shuttle, which during the summer transports visitors to and from Visalia, Exeter and Three Rivers.

RECYCLING

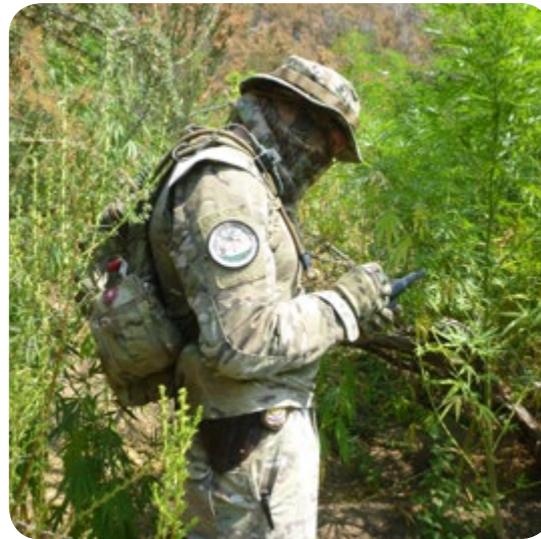
As the parks' concessioner, Delaware North at Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks accepts glass, aluminum and plastic materials at in-park markets for recycling. Markets charge a five-cent deposit for each recyclable container they sell. They do not, however, give refunds for cans and bottles purchased outside the park. Nevertheless, they will accept containers for recycling. To continue the recycling efforts of the parks, Delaware North makes a point of using recycled paper whenever possible. Many items that are sold in the markets and gift shops are produced from recycled or environmentally friendly materials.

Delaware North plans to expand their recycling program to include aluminum, glass, cardboard, paper, newspaper, magazines, plastics and tin used in their operations and by employees living in the parks. These recyclable materials represent more than 25,000 pounds a month in the summer season. There is hope that these numbers will increase with additional contributions.

ECOTOURISM

You can become an ecotourist! To explore volunteer opportunities in the parks, log on to volunteer.gov. Enter "Sequoia and Kings Canyon" in the keyword box. Apply for volunteer opportunities online.

NPS



Clockwise from top left: Rangers work to eradicate illegal marijuana grow sites in the backcountry; Biologists work to restore high-elevation water systems; The Muir Hut was constructed by the Sierra Club; Scientists track frog numbers in the park's waterways; All stages of the tree life cycle are on display.



PHOTOGRAPHY

The ecosystems of America's national and state parks and public lands are among the most diverse on the planet—from the wetlands of the Everglades to the temperate rain forests of Olympic National Park and the deserts of Death Valley to the mountains of Yellowstone and Grand Tetons. For both aspiring and experienced photographers, the goal of any trip to a national park is to capture its endemic wildlife.

Taking photographs of animals presents a unique set of challenges. Landscapes cooperate; wildlife does not. Not only are animals likely to react to a photographer's presence, but they are also driven by their own instincts and behavior, which can make capturing them difficult. The tips below will help you compose better wildlife images of all creatures great and small—from the bison to the tiniest hummingbird and everything in between.

- **Use a tripod.** If you are using a large telephoto lens, consider investing in a gimbal head, which will make it easier to track your subject.
- **Know your subject.** Before you take out your camera, understand your subject's

behavior so that you can be prepared for what it will do next.

- **The eyes have it.** Capturing your subject's eyes will lead the viewer into the picture and make your image more impactful. Always keep the eyes in focus and try to place them in the power points (the intersection of rule of third guidelines).
- **Keep a safe distance.** You'll want to keep a minimum of 25 yards between you and your subject and more than 75 yards for larger predators. That means that you'll need a big telephoto lens if you want to get up close and personal.
- **Shoot in burst mode.** Instead of taking a single frame, increase the probability that you'll capture the behavior, head position or angle by capturing multiple frames.
- **Be prepared.** Wildlife, and particularly birds, move quickly and without provocation. Practice your panning skills to better catch birds when they alight.
- **Timing is everything.** The best time to photograph wildlife is during the golden hours—at dusk and dawn—when the light is soft and less likely to cast harsh shadows across your subject's face.
- **Keep it simple.** The easiest way to draw attention to your subject is to use a simple background. Use a shallow depth of field to blur any distracting backgrounds.
- **Aim for the action.** Make your image more compelling by capturing your subject exhibiting its natural behavior—flying, hunting, eating or caring for young.

The best way to take better photographs is to practice, and you don't need to go far. Buy a bird feeder and build a studio in your backyard, where you'll be able to create your own version of *A Star(ling) is Born*.



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Don't miss your shot! Be aware of your surroundings.



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JUST FOR KIDS

There are several seasonal activities and programs you and your family can enjoy at Sequoia and Kings Canyon. Visit nps.gov/seki more information.

BECOME A JUNIOR RANGER

Children ages 5 and up earn a badge by discovering nature and history and learning how to protect parks. Sign up at a visitor center. The WebRanger program, available at nps.gov/webrangers, allows kids to play games and learn about national parks at home.

GO HORSEBACK RIDING

Leave from either Grant Grove or Cedar Grove on a steed to view the ranges of Kings Canyon. For more information, call (559) 335-9292 for Grant Grove; or call (559) 565-3464 for Cedar Grove; or visit nps.gov/seki.

RIDE THE FREE IN-PARK SHUTTLE

Ride a free in-park shuttle in Sequoia National Park. In the summer, plan a walk with your family or ride the in-park shuttle to a point away from your car, campsite or lodging and enjoy a leisurely stroll back. Always carry a map, water and all the items you need to be comfortable and safe during your walk.

TAKE A SNOWSHOE WALK

While bears may be sleeping, the rest of Sequoia and Kings Canyon teems with animal life and activity during the winter months. Park rangers may lead snowshoe walks when conditions are right.

These trips are not recommended for children younger than 10 years of age.

PARTICIPATE IN A CAMPFIRE PROGRAM

Listen to rangers, who come to campgrounds many nights during the summer to educate guests about the park's history, culture and wildlife.

TOUR THE DEPTHS OF CRYSTAL CAVE

Follow a naturalist's lead, venturing into the dark to learn about cave formations. Obtain tickets in advance, online at recreation.gov or check in the morning at the Foothills or Lodgepole visitor centers.

CREATE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Check visitor centers for books and games that will help children learn more about the park environment.

GO SLEDDING OR TUBING

In the winter, kids may be able to romp, stomp and fly down snow-covered hills on their sleds and inner tubes at designated snow-play areas in Big Stump, Columbine, Quail Flat, Big Meadows and Wolverton. Check with a visitor center for current weather conditions.

WALK WITH A PARK RANGER

If you are in Cedar Grove, Grant Grove, Mineral King, Foothills, Giant Forest, or Lodgepole, check for programs led by rangers. For more information, contact a visitor center or visit nps.gov/seki.



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IF YOU ONLY HAVE A DAY

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks cover 865,964 acres. To maximize your experience, choose one region to explore. To help you plan your visit to the parks, first stop at a visitor center to get an overview, then decide whether you will visit Mineral King, Foothills, **Giant Forest**, **Grant Grove** or **Cedar Grove**.

GIANT FOREST

By visiting **Giant Forest**, you can see the famed Big Trees, including the **General Sherman Tree**. The big tree—a 15-minute walk along a steep paved trail with stairs from the main parking area—is more than 2,000 years old and has the distinction of being the largest living tree in the world. Accessible parking is adjacent to the Generals Highway.

The 1.5-mile, one-hour **Big Trees Trail** ▲ features trailside exhibits and is fully accessible to those with disabilities. The trail begins at the **Giant Forest Museum**, an interesting and informative stop before you begin your hike, featuring exhibits on Sequoia ecology.

In less than an hour, on a seasonal basis, you can drive the Moro Rock-Crescent Meadow Road. Stop at **Moro Rock**, a large granite dome; **Tunnel Log**, a fallen sequoia that you can drive through; and **Crescent Meadow**, a lovely mid-elevation meadow. Add 60 minutes to climb Moro Rock and 60 minutes to walk around the meadow.

GRANT GROVE

At **Grant Grove**, near the Kings Canyon entrance, you'll want ample time to see the **General Grant Tree**. The Gen-

eral Grant is the second-largest tree on Earth. From the parking area, take a gently graded 0.3-mile, self-guiding trail that passes by other impressive giant sequoias, historic **Gamlin Cabin** and **Fallen Monarch Tree**, in which the cavalry guarding the park in the 1890s stabled their horses (partial accessibility).

CEDAR GROVE

If you decide to visit **Cedar Grove** in Kings Canyon, you will be treated to a lush place of tumbling waterfalls, meadows and miles of quiet trails. Half the excitement is the 1-hour drive getting there on Highway 180, which zigzags down into the canyon through Sequoia National Forest. Be sure to stop at **Junction View** on the way. Sheer canyon walls seem to close in around you as the wild South Fork of the Kings River surges over rapids far below.

Cedar Grove attractions include **North Dome**, which some say resembles Yosemite's Half Dome, noisy and powerful **Roaring River Falls** and scenic **Zumwalt Meadow**.

Roaring River Falls is less than a five-minute stroll from the parking area. During years of heavy runoff, the river pours through the gorge and over the falls with a tremendous roar. Even during the dry season the falls are impressive, thundering into a cold, green pool.

If you have an hour, walk around Zumwalt Meadow, a lovely meadow dotted with ponderosa pine. The striking rock formations of Grand Sentinel and North Dome rise protectively on opposite sides of the meadow.

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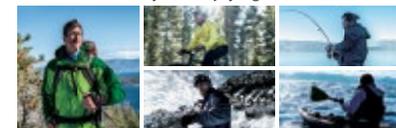


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