

# CEDAR BREAKS

NATIONAL MONUMENT • UTAH



# CEDAR BREAKS

Members of the National Park Service staff welcome you to Cedar Breaks National Monument. This monument was set aside for you and for the future generations. As you contemplate the ageless grandeur that you see here today, you can feel assured that, with the thoughtful cooperation of all the visitors, it will remain unimpaired to provide inspiration and enjoyment to those who come after you.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE MONUMENT

Situated high on the Markagunt Plateau in southern Utah at elevations reaching 10,700 feet, the monument contains a gigantic multicolored natural amphitheater. Within the steep-walled amphitheater, you will see limestone eroded into many fantastic shapes that have been formed by the never-ending efforts of rain, wind, snow, and ice. These formations display an amazing variety of color, as constantly changing light accentuates and subdues the vivid hues of the rocks. Sweeping vistas and attractive wildflowers offer superlative scenic values.

The monument is about 4 miles long and 2½ miles wide, covering almost 10 square miles. Two-thirds of the area is composed of high cliffs and steep talus slopes of the amphitheater. Cedar Breaks is surrounded by Dixie National Forest, which provides many recreational activities for the sportsman and camper.

Why the name "Cedar Breaks"? As you will notice, cedar trees are not evident here. Junipers, which the early settlers called "cedars," grow nearby, but they are at elevations considerably below the rim. The settlers, who also named the area, referred to the rugged country of cliffs as "breaks," or "badlands."

## TO HELP YOU ENJOY THE MONUMENT

The starting point of your visit should be the Cedar Breaks Visitor Center, located on the rim 1 mile from the south entrance to the monument. Here, a park ranger will be on duty to answer your questions about the monument and, if you wish, suggest places to see and things to do. The visitor center contains exhibits that describe the natural history of the area, including such subjects as the plant and animal life and the formation of the amphitheater.

*The Rim Drive.* You will find the 5-mile Rim Drive from Point Supreme to North View interesting and scenic. Along

this road through the forest and wildflower fields of the rim-top country, there are four convenient viewpoints, which are reached by side roads and short paths: Point Supreme, Sunset View, Chessmen Ridge Overlook, and North View. Each viewpoint presents a different scene, with the only duplication being the magnificence of the color display of the breaks.

*Trails.* Starting at Point Supreme and running for 2 miles along the south rim, the Wasatch Ramparts Trail provides some of the finest scenery in the monument. The trail leads through the forest, flower fields, along the rim, and to a very good stand of bristlecone pine. These pines are located on Spectra Point, 1 mile out on the trail.

A short trail leads to Alpine Pond, which is situated near the

Rim Drive. Many beautiful flowers bloom next to its shore. There are no trails to the bottom of the amphitheater.

*Brianhead.* For one of the most spectacular views, you may wish to visit nearby Brianhead, which has an elevation of 11,315 feet. From the shelter on this lofty point above timberline, you can look down on beautiful forests and meadows, with the colorful cliffs and rock formations of Cedar Breaks cutting into the green carpet of vegetation.

*The elevation.* If you are accustomed to lower altitudes, you may experience shortness of breath or lack of energy. This is normal. But you should walk more slowly than usual, thus expending less energy.

*Cedar Breaks Amphitheater as seen from Point Supreme.*



## GEOLOGY

*Formation of the amphitheater.* Geologists explain that the layers of rock composing the amphitheater walls, the Wasatch formation, had their origin about 55 million years ago as a limy ooze deposited in shallow lakes on a land surface near sea level. About 13 million years ago the land surface was slowly uplifted to its present elevation. As the plateau lifted, it produced a steep, westerly facing escarpment of limestone, which thus became exposed to the elements of erosion. This rock varies in hardness, and consequently the rain and snow water rushing down the cliffs, aided by frost and wind, eroded some parts faster than others, leaving resistant spires and ridges.

*Color.* Since all the rock is limestone, why do you see many different colors in the amphitheater? The white limestone cliffs are comparatively pure and contain little if any coloring mineral. The yellows and reds are iron oxide impurities in the limestone. The light lavender is an oxide of manganese.

*Lava beds.* Lifting of the land was accompanied by volcanic eruptions. Lava from the more recent eruptions appears to be only a few thousand years old. Very extensive and young lava beds are seen along the road between Cedar Breaks and U.S. 89. Many of these beds are fresh in appearance and remain without vegetation. The lava did not come from one central volcano; it resulted from many small eruptions and flows from cracks, or fissures, in the earth's surface.

## FLOWERS AND TREES

Throughout the monument, as soon as the snow melts, meadows and slopes become resplendent wildflower gardens. Abundant moisture and fertile soil encourage the growth of such plants as the marshmarigold, mountain buttercup, showy fraseria (or "green-gentian"), fringed gentian, columbine, larkspur, monkshood, mountain bluebells and fields of Indian paintbrush, lupine, and sunflower. The most colorful flower display is during July and early August.

All roads to Cedar Breaks bring you through heavy forests of pine, fir, spruce, and quaking aspen (the tree with the striking white bark). The rim of the amphitheater is dotted with subalpine meadows and groups of Engelmann spruce and alpine fir.

Of special interest is the bristlecone pine, which ekes out an existence on the relatively poor limestone soil that is within, and along the rim of, the amphitheater. Some of the bristle-



*Rim Drive through the highland forests.*

cone pines in the White Mountains of eastern California are the oldest known living things on earth, older even than the giant sequoias of California. The oldest dated pine at Cedar Breaks is approximately 4,200 years old. It may be seen from the Wasatch Ramparts Trail near Spectra Point.

Timberline, the elevation above which trees do not grow, is at about 11,200 feet in this section of southern Utah.

## AND THE ANIMALS

Mule deer may be found grazing in the meadows along the Rim Drive almost any morning or evening. The deer are the only large animals in the monument.

Marmots make their dens among the rocks near the amphitheater rim and are commonly seen along the Wasatch Ramparts Trail. Ground squirrels, chipmunks, and red squirrels gather the cones of the spruce for their winter food caches. Weasels, badgers, and porcupines also are common in the area.

You will see many birds in the monument. One of the most easily identified, and a regular guest at your table in the campground, will be the Clark's nutcracker, a handsome bird with a light-gray body and conspicuous white patches in its black wings and tail. The birds that fly rapidly along the rim, never

seeming to land, are the violet-green swallow and the white-throated swift.

## A BIT OF HISTORY

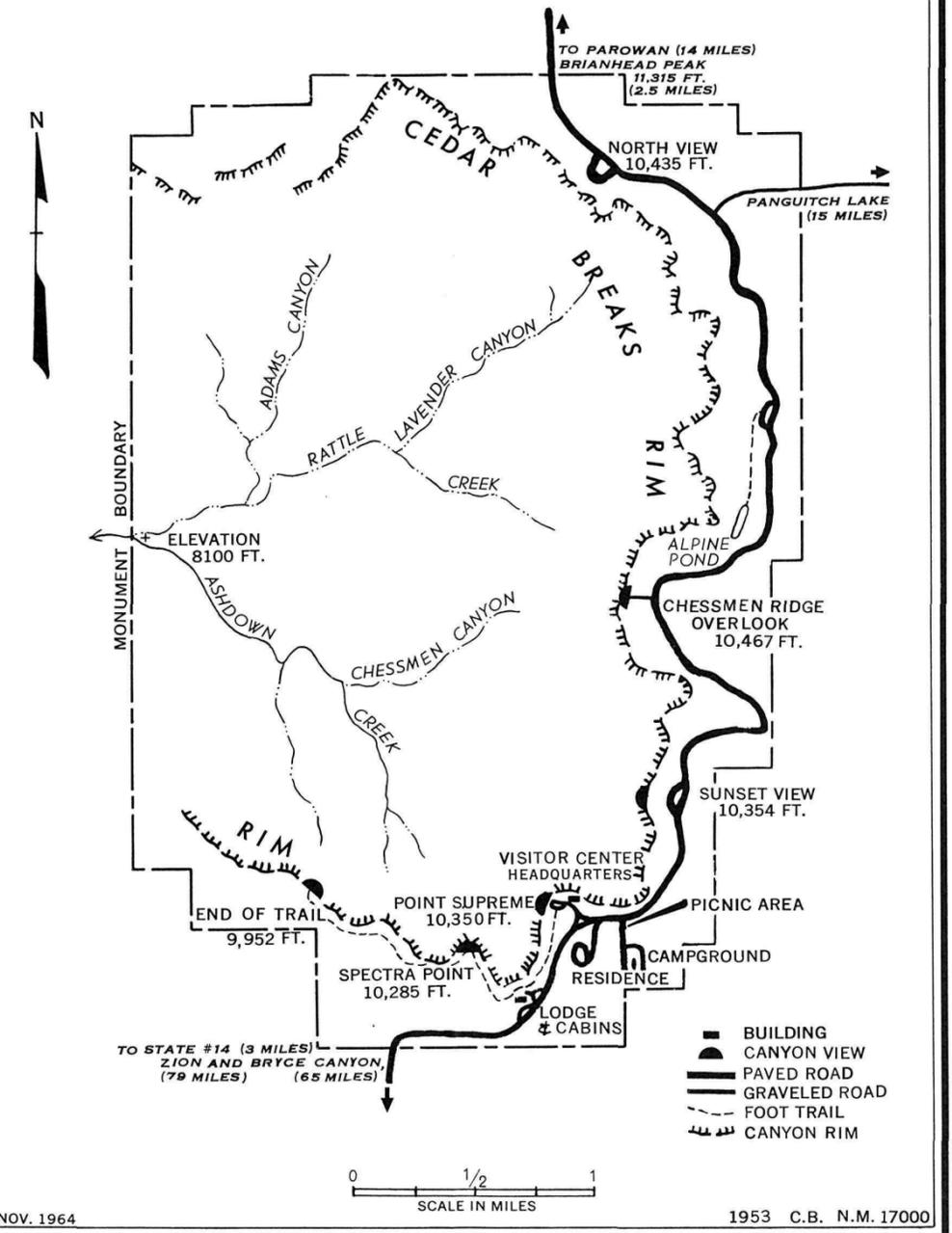
Early exploration of the Markagunt Plateau began in 1851, when the Mormons settled in Parowan and Cedar City in the valley to the west. In 1852, church leaders explored the headwaters of the Sevier and Virgin Rivers, which rise on the plateau, but they made no reports concerning the cliffs that are known today as Cedar Breaks.

Both the Wheeler and Powell Surveys of 1872 made extensive topographic records of the area, as well as observations on the plants, animals, and geology. For more than three decades following these scientific surveys, use was made of the grazing and timber resources.

The first protection afforded this unique region was in 1905, when it was included as a part of the Sevier (now Dixie) National Forest and was administered by the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The area was established as a National Monument by Presidential proclamation on August 22, 1933, and was placed under the administration of the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

# CEDAR BREAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT

## UTAH



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### ABOUT YOUR VISIT

*The season.* The travel season extends from early June to late October, depending on the weather. At other times, you should check road conditions before driving to the monument.

The amphitheater is always spectacular. But adding to your enjoyment of the views of the cliffs in early June will be the deep snowbanks left from the winter and the first of the spring flowers; in July and August, it will be the beautiful wildflower displays; and in the autumn, the coloring of the aspen and maple trees. Autumn foliage is most brilliant in late September and early October.

*Camping.* A campground and picnic area are maintained near Point Supreme. Water and sanitary facilities are provided. Groceries and gasoline, however, are not available within the monument. Weather permits comfortable camping from late June to about September 10; at earlier or later times, freezing temperatures are common at night.

*Housetrailer*s are welcome in the campground, but no utility connections are available for them.

*Accommodations.* A concessioner operates a lodge with snackbar, dining room, and cabins with bath. The lodge is generally open between June 15 and September 7. For reservations and rates, write the Utah Parks Co., Cedar City, Utah.

At nearby Cedar City (23 miles), motel and hotel accommodations are available all year. Motel facilities are also available in Parowan (19 miles).

### HOW TO REACH THE MONUMENT

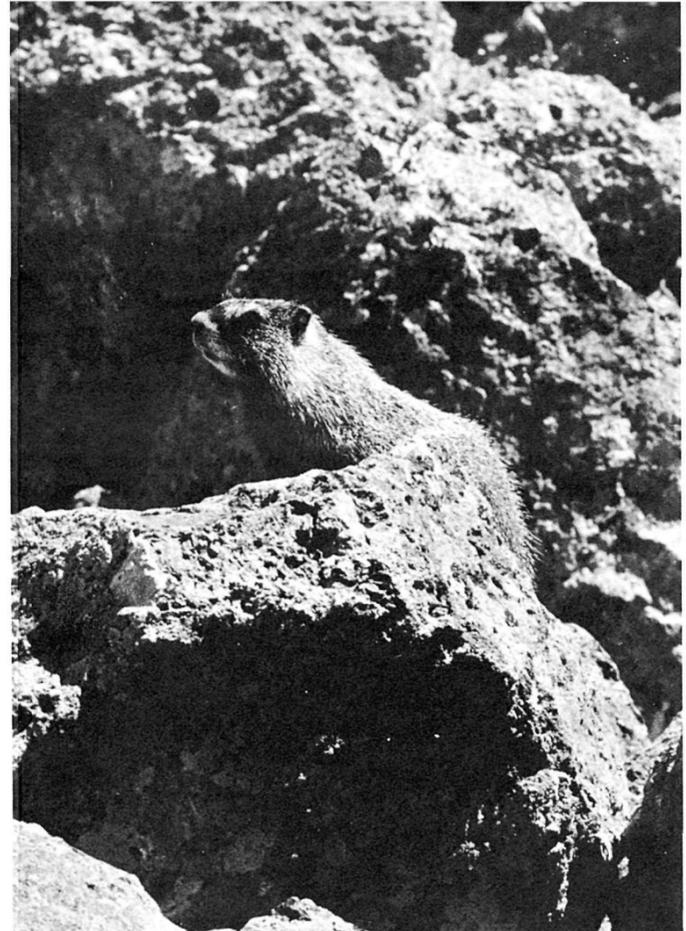
*By automobile.* The monument may be reached by paved road from either U.S. 89 or 91 over Utah 14 and 55. It is 27 miles from Long Valley Junction, located on U.S. 89, and 23 miles from Cedar City, on U.S. 91. The monument is 79 miles from Zion National Park and 65 miles from Bryce Canyon National Park.

*By train, bus, or airplane.* These forms of commercial transportation are available into Cedar City on regular schedules. Bus service from Cedar City, in the form of all-expense tours to Cedar Breaks, as well as to Zion, Bryce, and Grand Canyon National Parks, is furnished by the Utah Parks Co. The tours are on regular schedule from June 15 to September 7; they require special arrangements at other times.

Nationally known car rental agencies are located at Cedar City.

### WHILE YOU ARE HERE

Regulations have been authorized for the protection of the natural features and for your safety and convenience. Park



Yellow-bellied marmot, lord of the castle.

rangers are here to help and advise you and to enforce the regulations.

*Natural features.* It is against the law to disturb flowers, trees, rocks, or any other natural feature.

*Wildlife* is protected here, as in all areas of the National Park System. Trapping and the use of firearms are not allowed.

*Pets* must be kept on leash at all times. They are not permitted on trails or in public buildings.

*Camping and picnicking* are permitted in the campground and picnic area only.

*Hiking.* Refrain from shortcutting trails. For your safety, seek the advice of a park ranger before climbing or taking long hikes.

*Feeding animals.* Please do not feed the animals. Our food is not suitable for wild animals, and it will impair their health. And remember, even the cunning little chipmunk can inflict a painful bite.

*Sensible driving.* Drive only on the established roads and use the parking areas. Monument roads are built for the enjoyment of the scenery, not for speeding. Stay within the posted speed limits. Please observe the courteous and safe driving habits that you expect others to observe.

We hope that your visit will be an enjoyable one. If you need information or are in any difficulty, see a park ranger. And please help us keep your monument clean.

### ADMINISTRATION

Cedar Breaks National Monument, established on August 22, 1933, and containing 9.6 square miles, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.

The superintendent of Zion National Park, Springdale, Utah, 84767, is in charge of Cedar Breaks National Monument. All inquiries and comments should be addressed to him. A management assistant resides in the monument in summer.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—bears a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute their full measure to the progress and prosperity of the United States—now and in the future.



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