

Great Basin

National Park
Nevada

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK

In the heart of a region of wide basins and high mountain ranges lies Great Basin National Park. Established in 1986, Great Basin is one of America's newest National Parks. Total area is 76,800 acres. Included within the park are the former Lehman Caves National Monument and Wheeler Peak Scenic Area.

The Park has exceptional scenic, biologic and geologic attractions. Habitats for plants and animals extend from the upper Sonoran sagebrush communities to the Arctic Alpine tundra life zone. From spring through the summer many kinds of wildflowers bloom in a progression up the mountain slopes. Pine, spruce, fir and mountain-mahogany occur in the forest. Several types of wildlife are frequently seen, such as mule deer feeding in mountain meadows or golden eagles soaring overhead. Don't be surprised to see cattle grazing in the park. The establishing legislation considers cattle grazing an integral part of the Great Basin scene. Similarly, unpatented mining claims may continue to be worked.

VISITOR ACTIVITIES

Of particular interest in the park is Lehman Caves, one of the largest limestone solution caverns in the western United States. The cave contains numerous stalactites and stalagmites which developed slowly during the centuries as water seeped into the cave, leaving minute amounts of mineral behind. Huge fluted columns of various colors reach from the floor to the ceiling, suggesting the

vast amount of time needed to decorate the cave.

A trail through the cave passes close to an array of formations, including unusual shields, found here and in few other caves. Rock forms, color, and shadow stimulate one's imagination. No two cave rooms are alike; each has its own display of wonders. Trips through the cave are conducted daily over a two-thirds mile paved trail with stairways. About 1 1/2 hours are required for the tour. The temperature averages a chilly 50 degrees Fahrenheit, so warm clothing is suggested. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

The Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive extends 12 miles to the 10,000 foot elevation on the flank of Wheeler Peak. From there you can take hiking trails past several alpine lakes to a rare and ancient bristlecone pine forest; or reach the summit of Wheeler Peak (13,063 feet). Back-country hiking and camping are permitted.

Camping is allowed at three campgrounds located along the Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive. The National Park Service also maintains picnic facilities in the headquarters area. A concessioner sells refreshments, meals, and souvenirs from April through October. Even though there are no developed cross-country ski trails, winter provides good opportunities for backcountry skiing.

SAFETY

The park area is usually quite dry. Ample

drinking water should be carried with you when hiking. Surface water should be treated before use. Winter conditions can be extreme. During warm weather rattlesnakes are occasionally seen. If you have a heart condition or have difficulty breathing, remember the high elevation and take it easy.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Park headquarters is located at Lehman Caves, 5 miles west of Baker, Nevada, near the Nevada-Utah boundary. U.S. 6 and 50 are 10 miles to the north and U.S. 93 is 40 miles to the west.

Great Basin National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Baker, Nevada 89311, is in immediate charge.

PLEASE HELP PROTECT YOUR PARK

Keep your pets on leash or in your car; they are not permitted in buildings, in the cave or in the backcountry.

Flowers, trees, rocks and other natural features must not be marred, destroyed or removed.

Do not disturb, injure or kill the wildlife.

Locating mineral claims within the park is not allowed.

While in the cave, please stay on the trail and with your guide at all time. Do not remove, touch, break, mark, or deface the walls or any formations.

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