

Cedar Breaks

NATIONAL MONUMENT • UTAH

• GPO: 1973-515-985/118
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Your visit to this national park can be most pleasurable and rewarding, or it can be a time of vexation, distress, or even tragedy. Much depends on how you and your family observe the simple rules of the wilderness. The safeguards are yours—please use them. If you are in doubt, ask a park ranger.

ADMINISTRATION

Cedar Breaks National Monument, P.O. Box 749, Cedar City, Utah 84720, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The superintendent of Zion National Park, Springdale, UT 84767, is in charge of the park.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

A gigantic multicolored amphitheater is here being slowly scooped from the western edge of the rolling green alpine meadows atop southern Utah's high country. Your first impression in this nearly 10-square-mile national monument is that nature is an inspired artist.

Within the steep-walled ravines of the natural amphitheater, rain and wind, snow and ice have eroded the limestone into many fantastic shapes. Added to this are sweeping vistas of forests and mountain wildflowers.

The name "Cedar Breaks" is derived from the early settler's use of the term "breaks" for badlands and their erroneous use of "cedar" for the junipers growing near the base of the cliffs.

THE ROCKS

Rock layers that compose the amphitheater walls originated some 55 million years ago as limy ooze deposited in shallow freshwater lakes near sea level. During the last 13 million years, the area was slowly uplifted to the present elevation of more than 10,000 feet. This produced the steep westward-facing escarpment of limestone that is exposed to the elements of erosion. Gradually water, aided by frost and wind, eroded softer parts of the limestone. The more resistant parts remain as spires and ridges of countless shapes.

Lifting of the land was accompanied by volcanic eruptions. Lava from more recent eruptions may be seen along the road between Cedar Breaks and U.S. 89. Many of these lava beds still do not support vegetation.

Pure limestone is white, as the band near the rim; the many colors of the breaks result from oxidation of impurities, mainly iron and manganese, in the rock.

PLANTS

The wildflower display begins as soon as the snow melts and reaches its peak during July and early August.

The monument contains majestic stands of pine, fir, spruce, and quaking aspen, interspersed with mountain meadows. Tree line is at about 11,200 feet in this section of southern Utah.

Bristlecone pine is of special interest. Small stands grow on the relatively poor limestone soil that is within and along the rim of the amphitheater. The oldest dated pine at Cedar Breaks is about 1,600 years old. It may be seen from the Wasatch Ramparts Trail near Spectra Point.

In order to help preserve this magnificent setting, please do not disturb wildflowers, trees, rocks, or any other natural feature.

ANIMALS

Mule deer, the only large animals in the monument, graze in the meadows along the Rim Drive almost every morning and evening.

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 spruce cones for their winter food caches.

"The conies [pikas] are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks . . ." (Proverbs 30:26). The pikas are also a clever folk. They cut and cure grasses in summer and store them for winter. Watch for the small, short-eared, stubby-tailed creatures on the high rocky slopes; they are there but are not often seen. The pika is related to hares and rabbits.

You will see many birds in the monument. One of the most easily identified, and a regular guest at your campground table, will be the Clark's nutcracker, a handsome bird with a light-gray body and conspicuous white patches in its black wings and tail. Birds that fly along the rim, never seeming to land, are the violet-green swallow and the white-throated swift. Other birds of special interest include the golden eagle, the blue grouse, and our national symbol, the bald eagle.

Wildlife is protected here, as in other units of your National Park System. Trapping and the use of firearms are not allowed.

Please do not feed the animals. Human food is not suitable for wild animals, and it may even impair their health. Those who insist on feeding wild creatures are being cruel to the animals and risk getting a painful and dangerous bite.

HISTORY

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

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

In 1905, the area was included as a part of Sevier (now Dixie) National Forest, administered by the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. It was established as a national monument on August 22, 1933, under the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

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

The visitor center, which contains exhibits that describe the plants and animals and formation of the amphitheater, provides an excellent focal point for your visit. It is on the rim 1 mile from the south entrance. From early June through Labor Day, a park ranger is on duty here daily to answer your questions about the monument and suggest places to see and things to do.

Park rangers enforce regulations; consult them if you are in any difficulty. Park naturalists help you to understand the geology and other natural history of the park. All park personnel welcome your observations and inquiries.

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

The Rim Drive. This 5-mile road winds through the forest and wildflower fields of the rim and provides many panoramas of the breaks and the high country. Four major viewpoints, Point Supreme, Sunset View, Chessmen Ridge Overlook, and North View, are adjacent to this route.

Please drive only on the established roads, use the parking areas, and stay within posted speed limits. Monument roads are built for enjoyment of the scenery. Alpine vegetation is fragile and may require a human lifetime or more to recover from human damage. Do not drive on meadows.

Trails. The following trails are maintained for your pleasure, but be sure to seek the advice of a park ranger before climbing or taking long hikes. Do not shortcut trails. There are no trails to the bottom of the amphitheater.

Wasatch Ramparts Trail, starting at Point Supreme and running for 2 miles along the rim, leads through alternating forests and open fields of wildflowers and to a stand of bristlecone pine on Spectra Point.

Alpine Pond Trail. This short trail leads to Alpine Pond near the rim drive. Many wildflowers bloom on the pond's shore.

Bristlecone Pine Trail. An even shorter walk leads from Chessmen Ridge Overlook to a stand of bristlecone and limber pine on the rim.

Brianhead Peak. For a most impressive view, you may wish to visit 11,315-foot Brianhead Peak, 2½ miles north of the monument's boundary, in Dixie National Forest. From a shelter on this lofty point, you can see forests and meadows, with colorful cliffs cutting into the green carpet of vegetation.

The Elevation. If you are used to lower altitudes, and you experience a shortness of breath, slow down and rest frequently.

ACCOMMODATIONS

A campground and a picnic area near Point Supreme have water and sanitary facilities, but groceries and gasoline are not available within or near the monument. Weather permits comfortable camping usually from late June to Labor Day; at earlier or later times, freezing temperatures are common at night. Housetrailers can be accommodated at the campground, but no utility connections are available.

Motels and hotels are available in Cedar City (23 miles); motels, in Parowan (19 miles). Consult a

road map for locations of other communities where you can get accommodations.

HOW TO REACH THE MONUMENT

Cedar Breaks is reached via Utah 14, 27 miles from U.S. 89 at Long Valley Junction, and 23 miles from Int. 15 at Cedar City. It can also be reached via Utah 143, 14 miles from Parowan.

Zion National Park is 79 miles away via Cedar City and Int. 15, or 73 miles via Long Valley Junction and U.S. 89; Bryce Canyon National Park is 65 miles.

You can get to Cedar City by scheduled buses and airlines. Car rental agencies are in Cedar City.

