



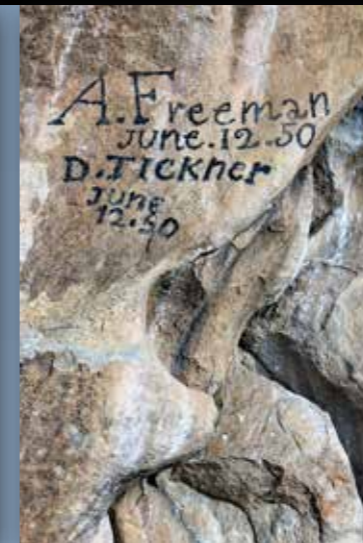
Sculpted granite rocks invite exploration.
© DAVE BOWER



Hikers explore Elephant Rock.
NPS



Autumn aspen leaves provide striking color in the heart of the "City."
© ANTONIO PLASENCIA



Emigrants left record of their passing in axle grease.
NPS



Window Arch illustrates the creative weathering of granite.
© DAVE BOWER

Trails and Travelers

Between 1843 and 1882 a mass migration of people headed west. They first sought land, but in 1848 the discovery of gold in California enticed thousands to hit the trail seeking their fortune. Travelers packed tools, food, books, clothes, furniture, and family heirlooms—everything needed to build a new life in a land of promise. The first emigrants followed the landmarks described by fur trappers and early explorers. Others soon followed wagon ruts and published descriptions. They braved weather, hunger, thirst, disease, accidents, and attacks. Many buried loved ones along the way. The obstacles were enormous, but so was the desire for a better life.

Over 200,000 emigrants followed the California Trail through *City of Rocks*, a name coined by James F. Wilkins, emigrant and artist, in August 1849. Weary by the time they arrived, many found delight and inspiration at this geologic marvel. In 1857 Helen Carpenter wrote . . .

women ad children waded off to enjoy the sights of the city. We were . . . spellbound with the beauty and strangeness of it all. . . . Here they rested, grazed stock, and left their names and messages on the rocks. Many were forced to lighten loads, leaving behind precious items before embarking on the most dangerous part of their trek—Granite Pass, Forty Mile Desert, and the Sierra Nevada.

Wagon routes were rarely used after completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Regional supply and stagecoach routes connected communities with depots. The City of Rocks stage station provided refreshment and lodging. Homesteaders moved here in the 1870s to graze cattle and dryland farm. This same ranching lifestyle continues today.

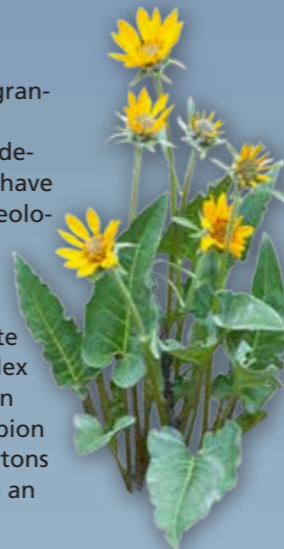
As part of the largest overland emigrant route in American history, the Reserve preserves the most intact and authentic setting of the California Trail. City of Rocks is a landmark and refuge that inspires all who visit.

Nature's Sculptures

Emigrant journals describe this sculpted granite city as displaying steeples, cathedrals, pyramids, windows, and bathtubs. Some described the rocks and processes that may have formed them. Even today, the complex geology attracts professors and students alike.

City of Rocks is located in the Basin and Range physiographic province. The granite pluton of the ancient Green Creek Complex and the significantly younger Almo Pluton are best exposed here in the southern Albion Mountains. While only the tips of the plutons are visible, these ancient granites are like an open window into the earth's crust.

Once exposed, granite is subjected to weathering by wind, freezing and thawing water, salt, and other naturally corrosive chemicals. These forces work to create pinnacles, pan-holes, honeycombs, windows, and arches. Self-discovery of these unusual granite sculptures awaits the modern-day explorer along nearly every trail.



Arrowleaf balsamroot is one of the more common and showy flowers of the sagebrush steppe.
© MARY SANSEVERINO

Ecological Crossroads

The 14,407-acre Reserve exhibits what some scientists call a biogeographic crossroads, where many plants and animals are on the edge of their habitat range. Some plants and animals of the Great Basin, rarely occur farther north of here, like pinyon pine, pinyon jay, and ringtail. Colorado columbine, common in the Rocky Mountains, occur no farther west. Longhorn plectritis, slim larkspur, and western columbine occur here, but rarely east. These overlapping ecological areas provide scientists and students an opportunity to observe the ebb and flow of living communities, which can be early warning signs or predictors of ecological change.

Over 750 species of plants and animals have been documented within the Reserve. A few species of special interest include cliff chipmunk, Virginia warbler, Simpson's hedgehog cactus, and pinyon pine.



Rough-legged hawk
NPS



Circle Creek Basin at sunrise.
© DWIGHT PARISH

Cliff chipmunk
© TONY GODFREY

Slim larkspur
© AARON ARTHUR

Green-tailed towhee
© LARRY SELMAN

Longhorn plectritis
© PAUL SLICHTER

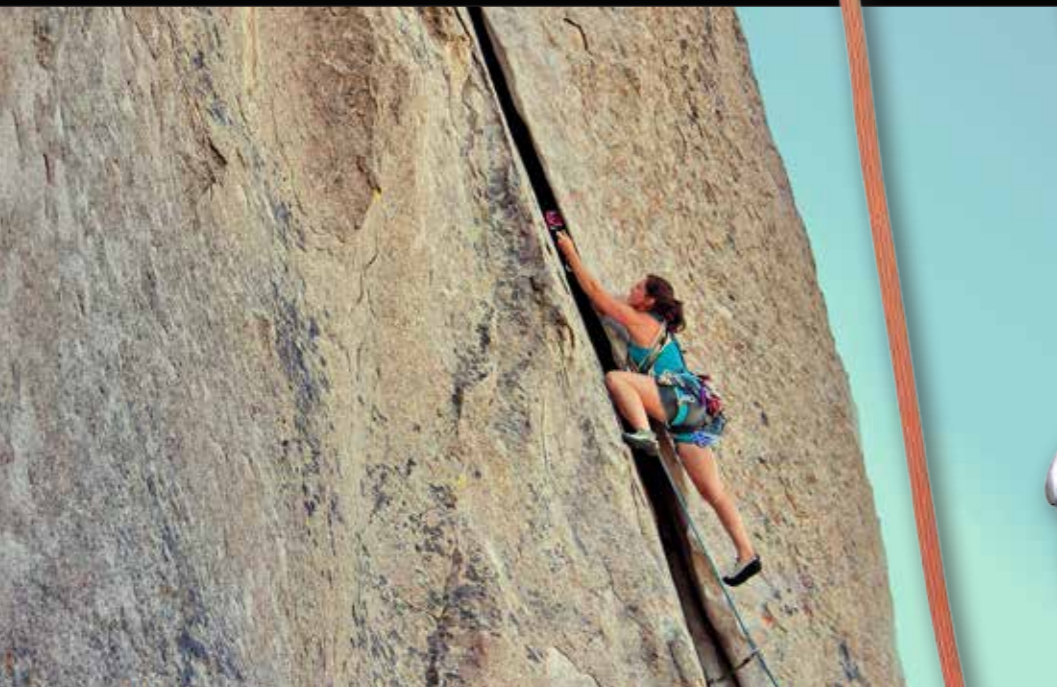
Great basin sagebrush
NPS

Western columbine
NPS

Juniper titmouse
© ALISON SHEEHY

Gray flycatcher
© LARRY SELMAN

Pinyon jay
© STEPHEN PARSONS



Climbing is one of the more popular recreational activities in the Reserve.

World Class Rock Climbing

City of Rocks is internationally renowned for rock climbing. The granite spires range from 30 to 600 feet high. Their textured rock is tailor-made for both sport and traditional climbing. City of Rocks offers a mixture of moderate (5.6–5.9) and advanced climbs (5.10–5.13), often found side by side. Single and multi-pitch routes span features and challenges that require a full range of technique and style not generally found in one climbing area. About 700 routes have been developed. All climbers should become familiar with the Reserve's climbing guides, closures, and regulations. Information is posted at the Bath Rock kiosk and is available at the visitor center or website. Registration or permits are not required to climb. Climbing is not permitted on rocks within the California Trail corridor.

SAFETY Do not climb unless you have training and experience. Serious accidents can occur when rock scrambling. There are no signs or fences to warn you about natural cliffs and crevices. Parents should use caution with children around these features.

In summer, park staff give climbing demonstrations. The Climbing Experience Program offers a supervised climbing experience with our staff for a small fee (equipment provided). Commercial climbing guides operate within the Reserve. Ask at the visitor center for a list of permitted and authorized guides.

A wired nut in a crack is a form of protection for the climber.

© DUNCAN PATTERSON

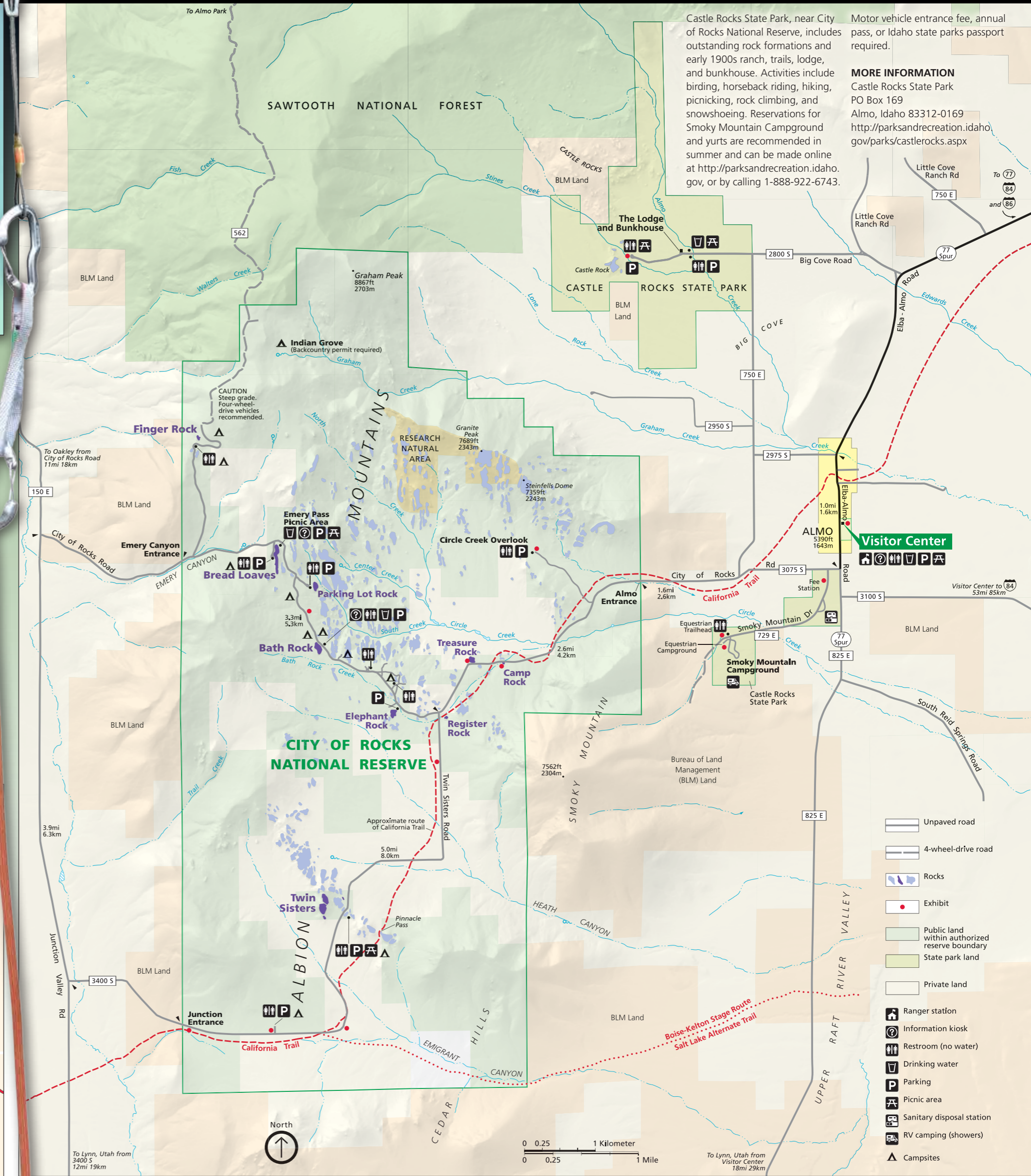


PLANNING YOUR VISIT City of Rocks National Reserve offers scenic walks near the California Trail, photography, world-class technical rock climbing, hiking, birding, mountain biking, horseback riding, picnicking, and camping.

VISITOR CENTER The visitor center for City of Rocks National Reserve and Castle Rocks State Park is in Almo, ID (see maps). Stop there for information on things to do, road conditions, restrictions that may be in effect, and to see the exhibits. Books, maps, and other park-related items to help you enjoy the Reserve are also available.

SERVICES AND FACILITIES Restaurants, gas, lodging, and groceries are available in Almo and other nearby communities. Park facilities are primitive. Potable water is available at the hand-pump wells at Emery Pass Picnic Area and Bath Rock. This water is for drinking; help us keep the water source safe for all. Treat any other water for drinking by boiling, chemicals, or adequate filtration.

HIKING Over 22 miles of hiking trails lead to climbing areas, striking features and dramatic overlooks. Always carry water and monitor the weather. Elevation ranges from 5,720 to 8,867 feet. Stay on trails to reduce the chance of



Castle Rocks State Park, near City of Rocks National Reserve, includes outstanding rock formations and early 1900s ranch, trails, lodge, and bunkhouse. Activities include birding, horseback riding, hiking, picnicking, rock climbing, and snowshoeing. Reservations for Smoky Mountain Campground and yurts are recommended in summer and can be made online at <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov>, or by calling 1-888-922-6743.

Motor vehicle entrance fee, annual pass, or Idaho state parks passport required.

MORE INFORMATION
 Castle Rocks State Park
 PO Box 169
 Almo, Idaho 83312-0169
<http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/parks/castlerocks.aspx>

Visitor Center

Visitor Center to (84) 53mi 85km

- Unpaved road
- 4-wheel-drive road
- Rocks
- Exhibit
- Public land within authorized reserve boundary
- State park land
- Private land
- Ranger station
- Information kiosk
- Restroom (no water)
- Drinking water
- Picnic area
- Sanitary disposal station
- RV camping (showers)
- Campsites



Riding in the back country.

becoming lost. Take note of major landmarks like Granite Peak or Smoky Mountain before departing. Tell someone where you are going.

CAMPING Camping fees and regulations are enforced. Camp in designated areas only. Cutting vegetation and gathering firewood are prohibited. Vault toilets and water stations are centrally located. Most sites include a tent pad, picnic table, and grill. Permits are required for overnight backcountry use and are available at the visitor center. Reservations are recommended for summer and can be made online at <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov>, or by calling 888-922-6743, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm Mountain Time.

HUNTING Hunting is allowed in some areas. Before hunting, contact the Idaho Fish and Game Department for information and regulations or ask at the visitor center. "Shooting" or target practice is not permitted in the Reserve. For information on firearms regulations, check the park website.

ACCESSIBILITY We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. The Reserve is a mostly undeveloped primitive area. More information is available on our website or at the visitor center.

MORE INFORMATION
City of Rocks National Reserve
 PO Box 169
 Almo, ID 83312-0169
 203-824-5901
www.nps.gov/ciro

City of Rocks National Reserve is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more, visit www.nps.gov.

Follow us on Facebook.

©GPO:2012-xxxx-xxxx Reprint 20xx
 Printed on recycled paper.