

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES. Outside monument boundaries, about 2 miles from the campground, are Reds Meadow Lodge and store, where gasoline and oil, groceries, meals, cabins, a telephone, mail service, and saddle and pack horses are available.

FISHING is permitted in the monument, but hunting is forbidden. A California angling license is required for persons 16 years of age or over.

HIKING. Devils Postpile is one of the key points on the John Muir Trail, which runs between Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks. Lone hikers should inform the park ranger or neighbors before leaving camp. No lengthy trip should be made alone into the rugged Sierra.

Administration

DEVILS POSTPILE NATIONAL MONUMENT, established on July 6, 1911, 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 inspiration of its people.

The superintendent of Yosemite National Park, whose address is Yosemite National Park, Calif., 95389, is in immediate charge of the monument.

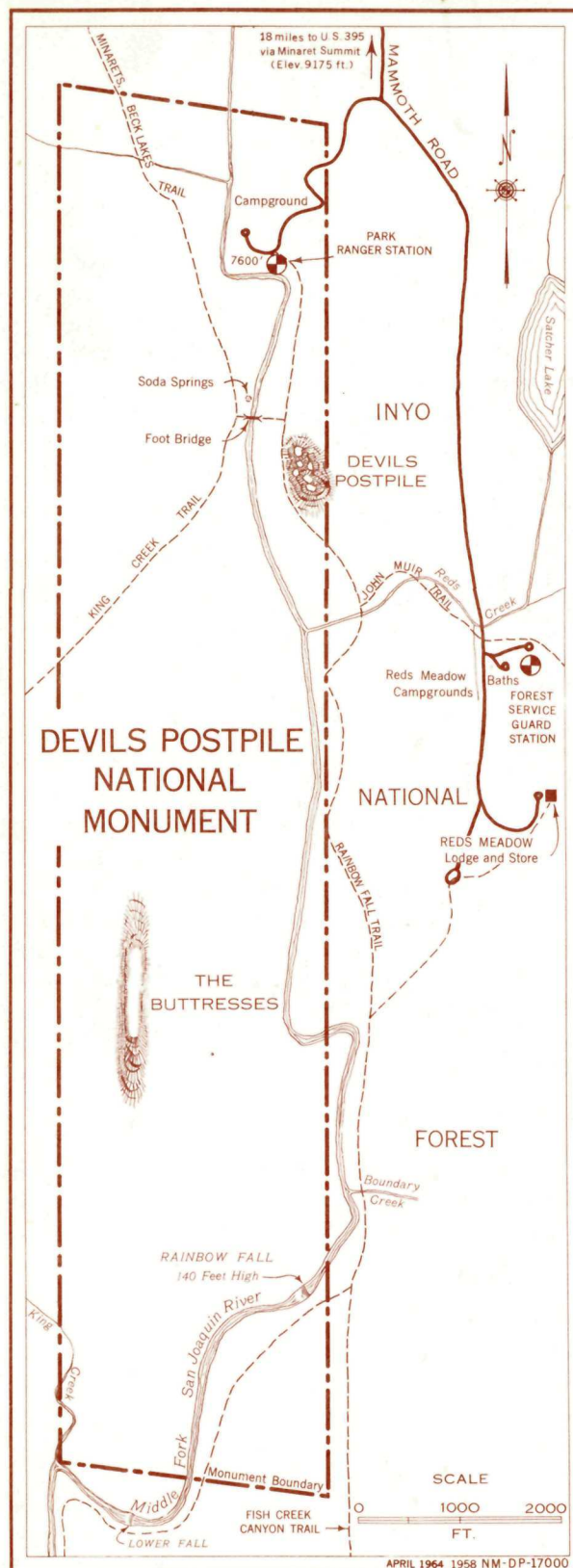
America's Natural Resources

Created in 1849, the Department of the Interior—America's Department of Natural Resources—is concerned with the management, conservation, and development of the Nation's water, wildlife, mineral, forest, and park and recreational resources. It also has major responsibilities for Indian and territorial affairs.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department works to assure that nonrenewable resources are developed and used wisely, that park and recreational resources are conserved, and that renewable resources make their full contribution to the progress, prosperity, and security of the United States—now and in the future.



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



DEVILS POSTPILE NATIONAL MONUMENT CALIFORNIA



IN A MAGNIFICENT FOREST and lake country southeast of Yosemite National Park lies Devils Postpile National Monument. The central feature of this monument is an extraordinary formation of symmetrical, gray-brown basaltic columns, some of which, rising more than 60 feet above their base, fit closely together like the pipes of a great organ. Among similar formations found in other parts of the world, the Giant's Causeway in Ireland is perhaps the best known.

How the Postpile Was Formed

The Devils Postpile is a remnant of a basaltic lava flow that originated in what is now known as Mammoth Pass and extended approximately 6 miles down the canyon of the Middle Fork of the San Joaquin River, to a point just beyond Rainbow Fall. This outpouring took place during the later interglacial periods in the Sierra Nevada—at least 915,000 years ago. The basalt cracked into columns as it cooled.

As the Middle Fork glacier advanced, it found this mass of basalt obstructing its path. Since the glacial ice at its maximum was about 1,000 feet thick, it easily overrode the obstruction, and began its extensive quarrying action on the fractured mass. During the thousands of years that the ice held sway, the bulk of this basaltic flow was removed, with only the more resistant parts left standing. Of these, the largest is the Devils Postpile, which is about 900 feet long and 200 feet high.

One side of the Postpile was quarried away by the glacier, leaving exposed a sheer wall of columns 40 to 60 feet high. Many of these columns have broken away from the face of the formation and lie in fragments in the talus slope below. While most of the columns are vertical, some are slanting, some are curved, and some radiate from a common center.

The top of the formation presents an unusual sight. Here the cross section of the 3- to 7-sided columns has been worn smooth by the grinding action of the glacier, and the exposed surface has the appearance of a mosaic or tile inlay. The pattern strikingly illustrates the characteristic shape of the columns, which under ideal conditions of rock composi-

tion and cooling would theoretically all be hexagonal. A marked trail leads to where the glacial polish can be seen.

Among the other interesting geologic features of the area is the pumice found in the northern part of the monument. This material, an exceedingly porous volcanic rock so light that it will float in water, was deposited in post glacial times by volcanoes located east and north of the Postpile. These volcanoes, now extinct, were part of a local volcanic system to which the Mono Craters belong. Several bubbling hot springs, one of which is at Reds Meadow, are other evidence of recent volcanic activity. It is thought that most of their heat comes from contact with gases from molten lavas that are in the process of crystallization.

Rainbow Fall

Two miles down the river trail from the Postpile, the Middle Fork of the San Joaquin makes a sheer drop of 140 feet into a deep-green pool. The dark basaltic cliffs contrast strikingly with the white water, and during the middle of the day many rainbows add to the beauty of the scene. Care should be taken when watching the fall from the edge of the gorge, because pumice and flaky stone make the footing dangerous. A short, steep trail leads to the bottom of the waterfall where willows, alders, western white pines, and mountain hemlocks, as well as numerous flowers and grasses, form an enchanting garden. Cars may be driven within three-quarters of a mile of the fall via the road to Reds Meadow.

About Your Visit

The monument, at an elevation of 7,600 feet above sea level, is reached by a 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile drive on a paved road from U.S. 395 west, thence 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles of mountain road via Minaret Summit to the Postpile and Reds Meadow.

During summer, park rangers are on duty to help visitors and to give occasional naturalist programs. If you need information or are in any difficulty, see a park ranger.

CAMPING. Near the park ranger station a free campground, with tables and benches, is maintained from about June 15 to October 15, depending upon the weather.

Rainbow Fall

