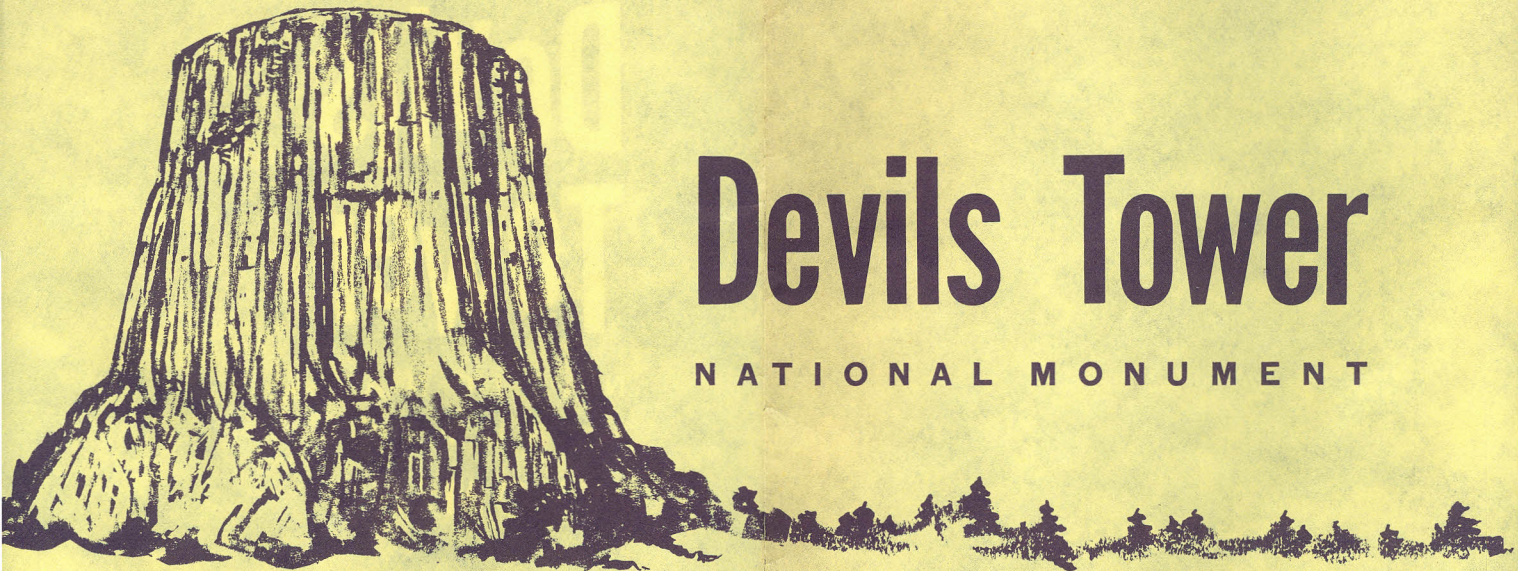


Devils Tower

NATIONAL
MONUMENT
WYOMING





Devils Tower

NATIONAL MONUMENT

LOOMING over the Belle Fourche River in the northeast corner of Wyoming, where the pine forests of the Black Hills merge with the grasslands of the rolling plains, stands Devils Tower.

This imposing formation is a stump-shaped cluster of rock columns 1,000 feet across at the bottom and 275 feet across at the top. It rises 865 feet above its wooded base and 1,280 feet above the river—or 5,117 feet above sea level.

For centuries Devils Tower played an important role in the legend and folklore of Indian tribes. It became a landmark to stalwart explorers and travelers pushing their way west from the Black Hills region. Long noted for its beauty and grandeur, DEVILS TOWER was proclaimed a National Monument—the first of many to be set aside for the people of the United States—on September 24, 1906.

Devils Tower, the tallest rock formation of its kind in the United States, is a popular subject of study by geologists, who are continuing their search for a more complete explanation of how it came into being. The Tower also stimulates speculation on what must have been its great influence upon the nomadic tribes that for centuries hunted, lived, and died in its shadow.

From vantage points that enable you to view it in its broader setting of pine forests under a brilliant western sky, and in everchanging light, the Tower is seen in many shapes and colors. The natural communities of plants and animals around the base of the Tower and on the 11½ acres of its isolated top are interestingly varied.

THE GEOLOGICAL STORY

Geologists tell us that the rocks exposed in Devils Tower National Monument are of two general types—igneous and sedimentary.

The Tower itself is igneous. It is composed of rock formed directly by the cooling and crystallization of once molten materials. As you look up at the great pillar, you will notice that its most striking feature is its curious fluted form; it appears to be made of a mass of vertical, polygonal columns. In the middle part of the Tower the columns are bounded by well-developed, open, smooth joints (cracks); but as the columns taper upward, the joints between them may be tightly compressed; some of the columns seem to unite.

The joints were established millions of years ago while the rock was solidifying from its once hot, liquid form. Contraction occurred as the rock cooled, forming the joints, which determined the sizes and shapes of the columns developed within the buried mass. Erosion, principally by the Belle Fourche River, has since uncovered the Tower by wearing away the softer rocks that once enveloped it.

Gravity, supplementing the heaving effects of freezing and thawing of water in crevices and joints, has caused many of the eroded columns to fall, crashing to the base and piling up the huge rocks into the "talus" you see as you walk around the Tower Trail. However, there is no record of any columns having fallen since white man entered the region.

The rocks exposed in the remainder of Devils Tower National Monument are sedimentary, formed by the consolidation of materials derived from other rocks or accumulations that were deposited either on the floors or near the shores of prehistoric seas. These rocks appear as layers of shale, sandstone, gypsum, and limestone.

Devils Tower owes its prominence on the landscape to the differing rates of erosion of these rock types and to the contrast of the somber color of the igneous core to the brightly colored bands of sedimentary rock that surround its base.

FROM ROCKS TO FOREST

Devils Tower National Monument is a natural exhibit of botanical plant succession. The story has to do with the changes from bare rock to soil-rich forest. One plant community gets started, to be replaced by another and still another.

Bright-colored splashes on the rock are masses of lichens. Mosses have taken over some of the more shaded habitats.

As more soil forms from the rock and dust settles in the crevices, grasses take over. Along Tower Trail you can see several little shelves and fissures well carpeted with grass. Once the grass patch is well established, cinquefoil, yarrow, pricklypear, and other wildflowers get started. Here, too, you can see shrubs such as sagebrush, currant, squawbush, and serviceberry. Where the shrubs are growing, you will find such trees as ponderosa pine, juniper, and quaking aspen.

So, at Devils Tower you can see every step in the process toward establishment of a forest, from bare rock to pines.

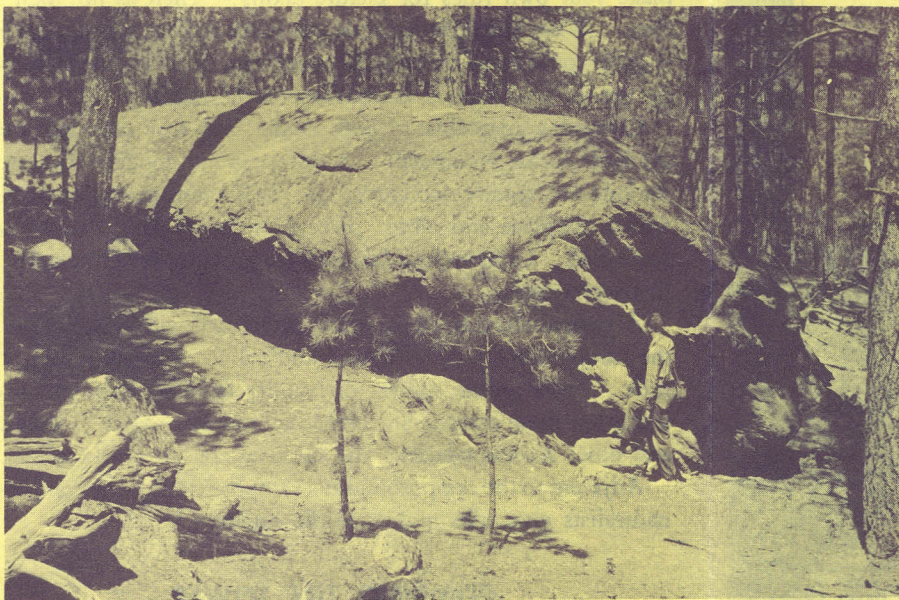
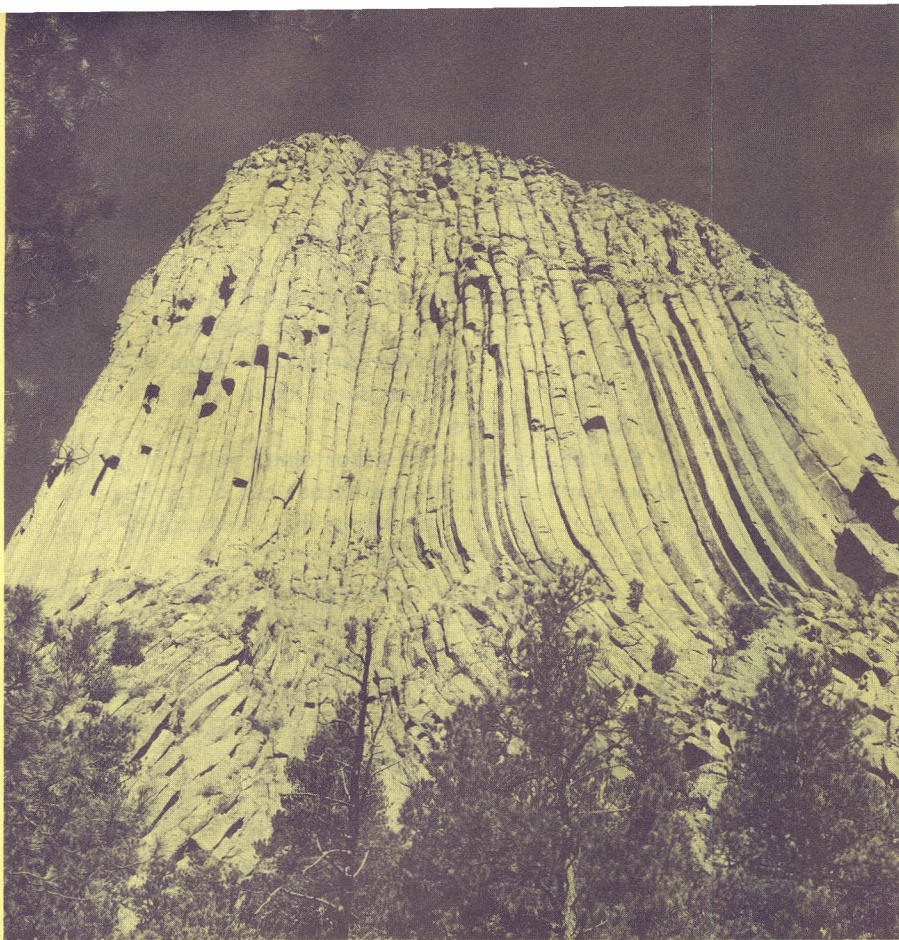
THE ANIMALS

The prairie dogs are the most frequently seen native mammals of the monument. About a half-mile from the monument entrance is a thriving prairie dog "town." A roadside exhibit tells you something of their way of life. These little ground squirrels have been almost exterminated from most of their former range; however, they are protected in the monument, as are all animals and plants.

Do not feed the prairie dogs. For an offer of candy and salted peanuts you may get a painful nip from sharp teeth. Furthermore, you should not let them get close to you, for they carry fleas that can transmit diseases to humans. Actually, it is far better to go after prairie dogs with a camera. You can safely get close enough to them for that.

You may occasionally see mule and whitetail deer, as well as cottontails, chipmunks, and other small mammals.

You will see many birds in the monument. Along the Tower Trail, watch for the canyon wren, Audubon warbler, hairy woodpecker, western flycatcher, and black-capped chickadee.



A fallen column, as seen from the Tower Trail.

Cactus growing on the isolated top of Devils Tower.

The monument entrance, on Wyo. 24, is 7 miles north of U.S. 14; 29 miles northwest of Sundance, Wyo.; 33 miles northeast of Moorcroft, Wyo.; and 52 miles southwest of Belle Fourche, S. Dak.

The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad and Continental Trailways buses serve Moorcroft. There is no regularly scheduled transportation from Moorcroft or other nearby towns to the monument. The nearest air terminal is Rapid City, S. Dak., 120 miles from the monument. Frontier, North Central, and Western Airlines serve Rapid City, and rental cars can be obtained there.

You should make the visitor center your first stop. It is about 3 miles from the monument's east entrance and close to the Tower. It contains exhibits that explain the geology, history, and natural environment of the Tower.

A self-guiding nature trail, called the Tower Trail, encircles the Tower. By taking it, you will see Devils Tower at close hand from all directions, gain a fuller understanding of the story, and become acquainted with much of the region's plant-life. It is about an hour's walk along a trail that is just over a mile long. To double your enjoyment of this walk, be sure to get a copy of the nature trail leaflet at the visitor center or from the box at the beginning of the trail. Take your camera with you.

Your visit to Devils Tower will not be complete if you do not take at least one photograph of the Tower. You will have to make your own rules for picture taking. There is no "best" time. When the light is flat on the south face at midday, there is good contrast on the east and west faces. When the light is flat on the west face, it is contrasty on the south.

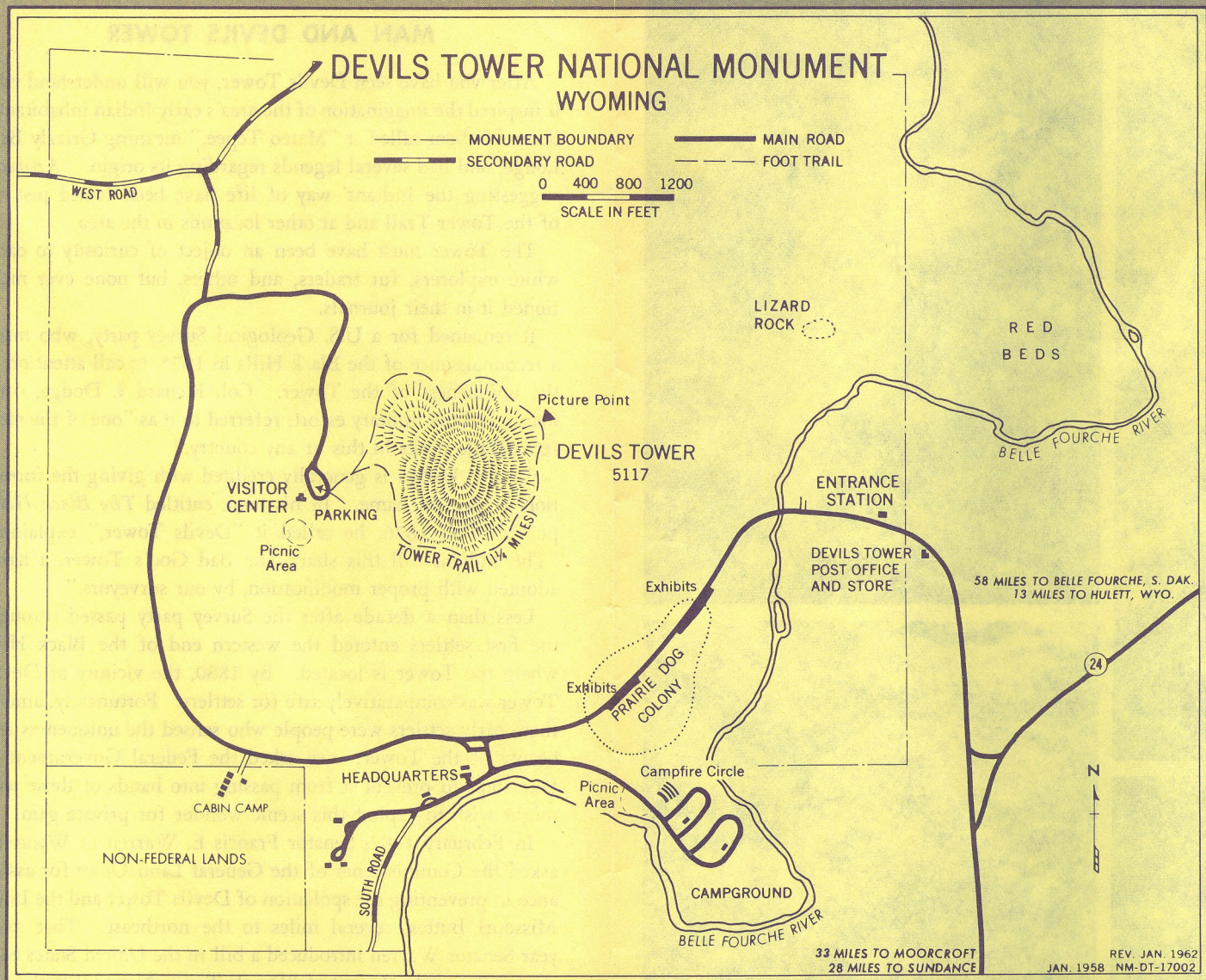
Campsites adaptable to both trailer and tent camping are available in the monument. A water tap and modern comfort stations are readily accessible, and each campsite is provided with a fireplace and table. Free firewood in long lengths is furnished. Campground facilities are provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

A general store and post office are located within 2 miles of the campground. A restaurant and cabin camp are within 1 mile. There are no shower or laundry facilities in the monument, but these services are available in nearby towns. Motels and other accommodations are also available in nearby towns.

Adjacent to the campground is a campfire circle where ranger-naturalists give talks nightly in the summer.

CLIMBING THE TOWER

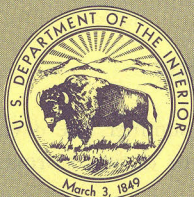
Have you wondered about climbing the Tower? There have been several hundred recorded individual ascents by skilled climbers.



VISITOR-USE FEES

Vehicle permit fees are collected at the entrance station during the summer. If you arrive when the entrance station is unattended, you must obtain a permit before leaving the monument. Fees are not listed herein because they are subject to change, but the information can be obtained by writing to the superintendent.

Fee revenues are deposited in the U.S. Treasury; they offset, in part, the cost of operating and maintaining the National Parks.



1963

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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CLIMBING THE TOWER

Have you wondered about climbing the Tower? There have been several hundred recorded individual ascents by skilled climbers.

It is a strenuous, exhausting climb. In the interest of safety, all climbers must register at monument headquarters at the time of starting and upon returning, and must give evidence that they are physically capable, have proper equipment, and have had experience in similar hazardous climbing.

HELP US PROTECT THIS MONUMENT

All objects in the monument—rocks, wildflowers, trees, and animals—must be left in place and undisturbed so that others, too, may enjoy them. This protection is a matter of law; it is also a matter of good citizenship and consideration for others.

If you plan to climb the Tower, you must register at monument headquarters before starting your climb. Approval of the superintendent must be obtained before attempting a climb.

ADMINISTRATION

Devils Tower National Monument, covering about 2 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 its people.

Development of this area is part of MISSION 66, a 10-year program to develop and staff the areas of the National Park System so that they can be used and enjoyed by both present and future generations.

At Devils Tower, the administration building and other improvements were accomplished under MISSION 66.

A superintendent, whose address is Devils Tower, Wyo., 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.



**THE FIRST
NATIONAL
MONUMENT**