



# Welcome to the Nation's First National Monument!

DEVILS TOWER IS AN ICONIC FORMATION, A monolith rising above the surrounding countryside. As you explore the monument today, the Tower you see will be remarkable, everlasting in its powerful appearance. Yet depending on the time of day and the weather, the formation can look dramatically different. Often, it is yellow-green against a clear blue sky, but in shadow the Tower is black and seems to stand a little taller. When fog rolls in, it is shrouded in mist, only peeking out occasionally to say hello. If you visit in the winter, the Tower will be covered in a dusting of snow. During sunset, the sun's rays will turn its face orange, reflecting the colors of the sky. In this way, the formation is remarkably dynamic, changing its appearance as the day and seasons progress – if you come back, you may see a different Tower than the one you see today. Yet Devils Tower is also timeless, changing on a scale imperceptible to human eyes.

Since people first arrived at Devils Tower more than 10,000 years ago, the monolith has remained essentially unchanged. The Tower you are seeing today is the same formation that Theodore Roosevelt protected as the nation's first national monument in 1906, the same landmark that explorers and settlers used as they moved west across the country, and the same stone monolith where Native Americans have gathered and prayed for thousands of years. The sense of awe that the Tower gives us is truly timeless. As you explore the monument today, we invite you to reflect on this timelessness. What does Devils Tower mean to you? Carry this meaning with you as you continue to explore America's public lands—get out there and Find Your Park!

## Important Information

- The Tower is sacred to many indigenous people; treat this place with respect.
- The speed limit on the main road park is 25 mph, in other areas of the park it is lower.
- The main park road is three miles long from the entrance station to the visitor center.
- Restrooms are located near the visitor center year-round and at the picnic area and campground May 15-October 15.
- In summer, parking near the visitor center is very limited:
  - It is often full between 10 am and 3 pm.
  - Consider parking in other designated areas during these peak visitation hours.
- For vehicles with trailers, long-vehicle parking spaces are available to unhook before heading up to the visitor center - find them on the way to the picnic area.
- The picnic area provides trail access to the Circle of Sacred Smoke sculpture, prairie dog town, and the visitor center.

## Invitation from the Superintendent:

### Respect the Park and Each Other

Welcome to Devils Tower National Monument, established in 1906 as the country's first national monument! The purpose of this park, also known to many as Bear Lodge, is to protect and preserve a world class geologic and sacred landmark that has shaped thousands of years of American Indian culture and the history of the Northern Great Plains.

Park staff and I want you to have an exceptional experience. Learn about the site through new accessible displays in the visitor center, participating in a ranger program, circumnavigating the Tower, and much more. As you explore the park, please protect resources and respect fellow visitors. Kindly stay on designated trails and do not enter closed areas. We recently completed a large construction project to increase accessibility around the visitor center and on the Tower Trail (see more on p.8). There are many fenced areas in this vicinity to protect fragile vegetation.

In 2021, Devils Tower received record breaking visitation with over 500,000 visitors, primarily in June, July, and August. The park is small geographically at just over two square miles (1,347 acres). Parking and facilities are limited. Please be courteous and patient. Only park in designated parking spaces, not along the roadway.

Join us in protecting and preserving this spectacular site so that current and future generations may enjoy it.

Thank you,

Superintendent Amnesty  
Kochanowski and Devils Tower  
National Monument Staff

DETO\_Superintendent@nps.gov

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Devils Tower Staff, 2021 Bat Festival. NPS photo

## During Your Visit

Have a safe and enjoyable visit by remembering these park regulations and advisories.



### Respect nature.

Leave plants, rocks, and artifacts where you see them. Stay on trails to protect plants.



### Do not feed wildlife.

It is illegal to feed wildlife, including prairie dogs. It is also dangerous and harmful to both humans and animals.



### Keep drones at home.

Launching, landing, or operating remotely piloted aircraft is prohibited within the monument.



### Drink water.

Heat-related illness is very common. Stay hydrated. Water bottle filling stations are available near the visitor center and in the picnic area and campground.



### Monitor weather conditions.

Sudden weather changes are possible. Thunderstorms and hail are common in the Black Hills. The safest place is your vehicle.



### Be responsible with pets.

Pets are not allowed on trails. Pet must be leashed. Pet-friendly areas include parking areas, roadways, the campground and picnic area.

# Getting Around the Park

**DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL Monument** is a 1,347 acre park, but it gets busy! The park has a single 3-mile road from the entrance to the visitor center. There is a paved spur which leads to the picnic and campground areas, and a gravel spur to access Joyner Ridge Trail and scenic view. Parking is very limited; read below for suggestions on where to go and what to do during peak visitation.



**National Park Service  
U.S. Department  
of the Interior**

## Devils Tower Visitor Guide Published by

Devils Tower Natural History Association (DTNHA) is the non-profit partner of the park. They operate the bookstore in the visitor center. Founded in 1958, DTNHA enhances park operations and the visitor experience through their financial support. See the back page for more info!

## Mailing Address

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## SUMMER PARKING

Parking is often full from 10 am to 3 pm. The main parking area is 3 miles from the entrance at the base of the Tower. All travel is one way through the parking lots. Watch for pedestrians, stopped or reversing vehicles, and emergency vehicles. The picnic area is an alternative parking location; from there you can hike to the visitor center or access the prairie dog town. Refer to the map below.

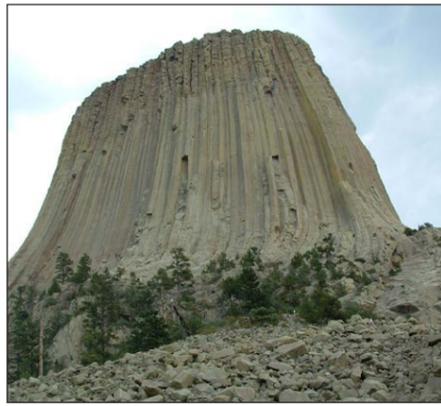
## LONG VEHICLE PARKING

Parking for long vehicles is limited near the visitor center. Towed vehicles are required to drop their tow at long vehicle parking or in the picnic area. RV parking is along the shoulder of the outbound lane from the paved parking lot.

## HIKING

Please take water and food with you. Heat-related illness is very common. The most popular trail in the park is the Tower Trail. This 1.6-mile paved footpath starts across from the visitor center and circles the base of Devils Tower. The first 0.16 miles is handicap accessible. Find signs along the path to learn more about your park. You can walk along Tower Trail, although it has several steep sections.

For a more traditional hiking experience, consider the Red Beds Trail. This makes a 2.9 mile loop around the Tower with great views and



The view from the start of the Tower Trail. NPS photo

diverse habitats. Access the trail from the main parking area or via connector trails from prairie dog town. This trail has about 450 feet of elevation change.

To get away from the busy Tower Trail and visitor center areas, head out to



A view from Red Beds Trail in the fall. This 2.9-mile loop is a peaceful contrast from the busy parking area and Tower Trail. NPS photo

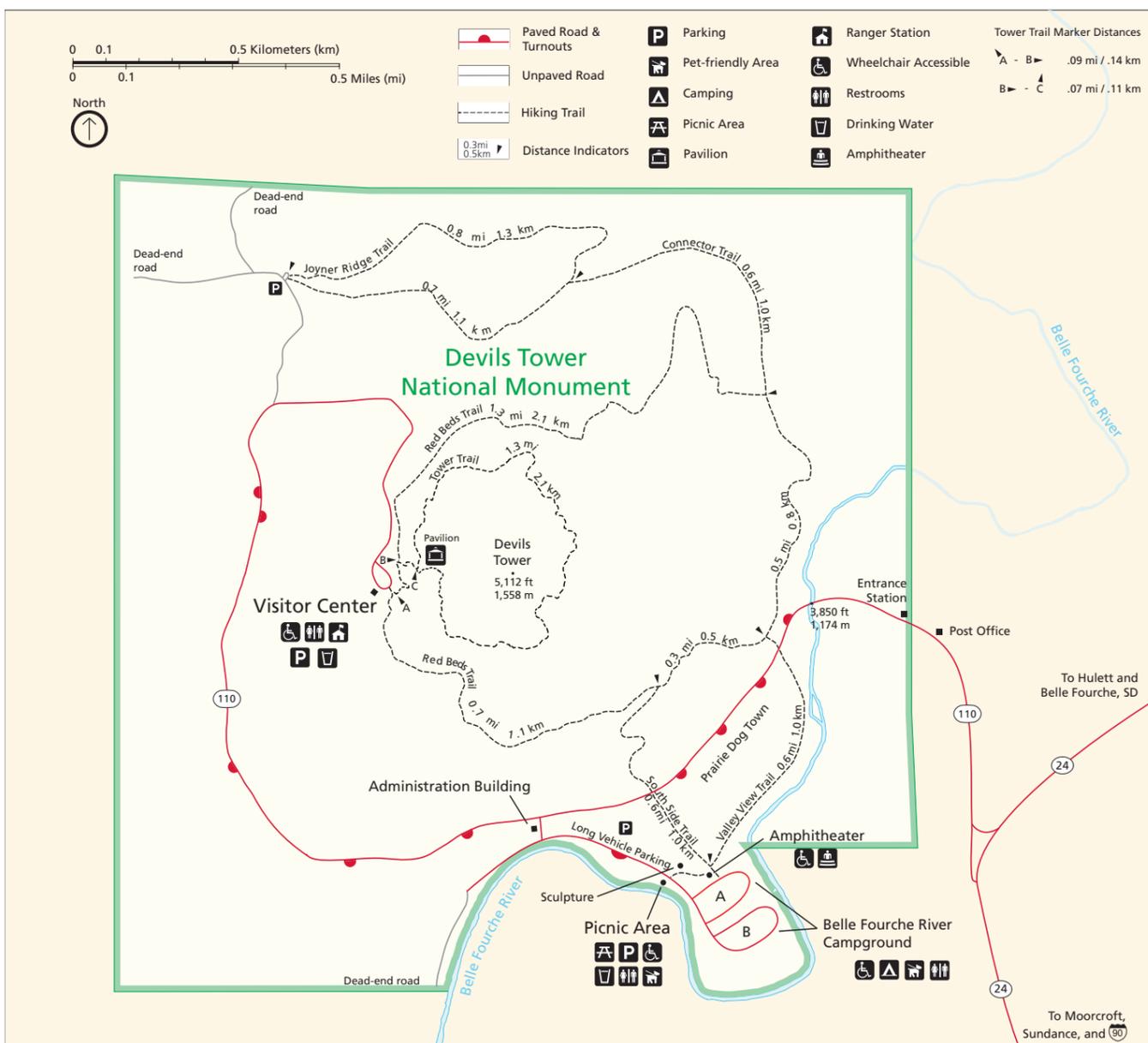
Joyner Ridge. A 1.5-mile loop offers great views of the leaning north face of the Tower. This hike has one major elevation change as you descend (or ascend) the ridgeline. Please remember that pets are not allowed on park trails.

## VISITOR SERVICES

The visitor center is open spring through fall. It is closed in winter. Inside you can find park staff, exhibits, and the park association's bookstore.

The picnic area and campground are in the valley below the Tower. Turn one mile from the park entrance, or two miles from the visitor center. The campground is open May 15-October 15 on a first-come, first-served basis.

Ranger programs are offered throughout the summer. Check the visitor center for program listings.



## Tower Trivia

- The Tower is 867 feet (264 meters) tall from the visitor center to the summit
- The monument is 1,374 acres, or about 2.15 square miles
- This is the United States' first national monument, dedicated September 24, 1906
- The park's visitor center was finished in 1935
- The Tower is made out of phonolite porphyry, a rare igneous rock
- The top of the Tower is about 1.25 acres and is covered in plants
- The park sees over 500,000 visitors per year, most from May to September
- An over 13-acre boulder field encircles the south and west face of the Tower
- There are 4,000-5,000 climbs of the Tower every year
- A technical rock climb to the summit of the Tower takes an average of 5-8 hours; times vary between 18 minutes and 16 hours!

# How Did the Tower Form?

DEVILS TOWER IS A GEOLOGIC mystery. Although the main ideas are understood, there is still debate surrounding exactly how the Tower formed. People commonly ask, “Is it a volcano?” The simple answer is no; the longer answer is explained here!

One thing all geologists agree on is that the Tower is a rock. Specifically, it is an igneous rock. These rocks form from molten material. If it reaches the Earth’s surface, we call this molten rock lava. While underground, it is magma. Lava and magma form different types of igneous rocks. Most geologists agree that the rock of Devils Tower formed from magma. That magma pushed upwards through layers of sedimentary rock – such as shale,

sandstone, and limestone – to create the formation we see today.

When magma pushes through other rock layers (such as happened here), it is called an intrusion. These intrusions can alter the landscape on the surface by pushing other rocks upwards, or they may simply break through the rock layers leaving little evidence of their presence.

The intrusive magma cools into igneous rock. This material is much harder than the rock around it. As the softer rocks erode over time, the igneous rock becomes exposed. This is the likely process by which Devils Tower came to look like what we know it as today.

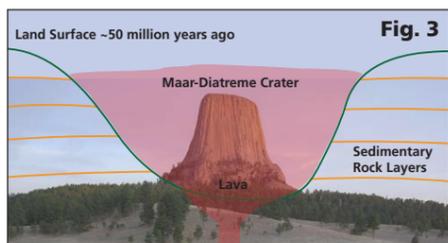
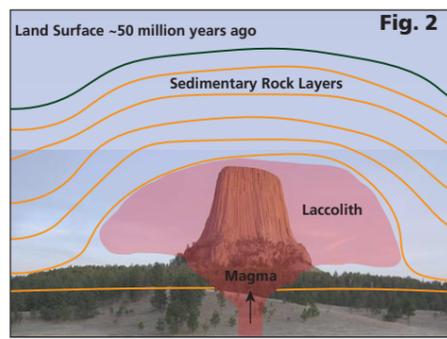
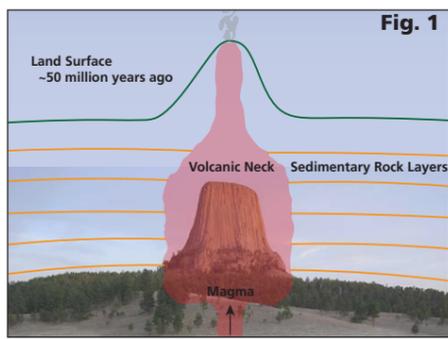
Early geologists assumed that the Tower was the plug of an ancient volcano (Figure 1). That would mean the magma which pushed upwards was connected to a volcano on the surface above. Although this hypothesis has not been disproven, other ideas about the Tower’s formation have also been suggested.

Laccoliths are magma intrusions which cause an uplift in the landscape above, but remain buried. This is another possible explanation for the Tower formation (Figure 2). Although they typically take a rounded or bulbous shape which the Tower does not have, several other laccoliths can be found along the northern edge of the Black

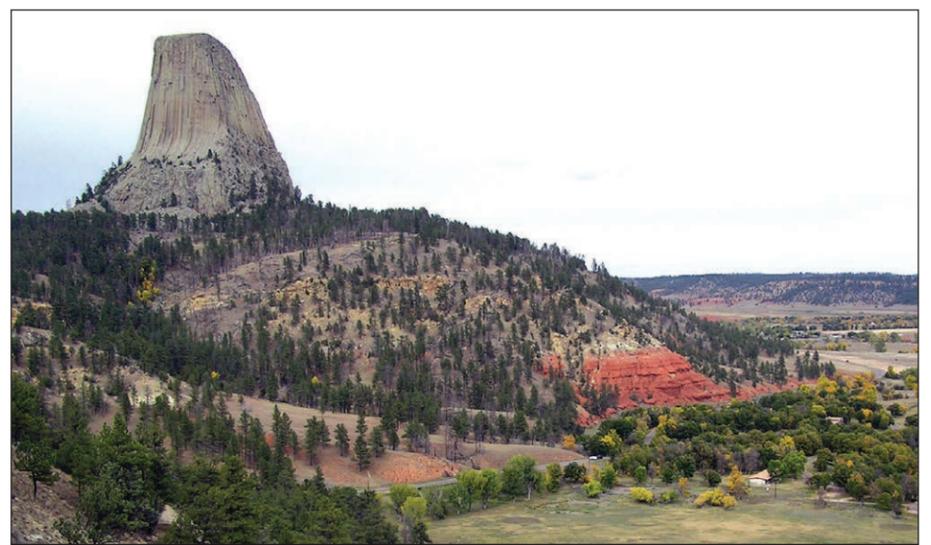
Hills. Bear Butte outside of Sturgis, SD is a well-known example.

The Tower has also been compared to maar-diatreme volcano formations (Figure 3). These occur when magma encounters underground water. The rapid expansion of water to steam creates an explosion; the resulting crater fills with lava and leaves behind an igneous formation.

Regardless of the processes which formed Devils Tower, geologists concur that a significant amount of erosion has occurred since it formed. This erosion is why the Tower dominates the landscape today, and why its formation remains such a mystery: much of the evidence geologists rely on has been eroded away!



These diagrams represent three different ideas of how the Tower may have formed. (1) a volcanic neck or plug; (2) a laccolith intrusion; and (3) a maar-diatreme crater. The exact process which formed Devils Tower may remain a mystery for years to come. NPS diagrams



Today Devils Tower rises over 1,200 feet above the Belle Fourche River Valley. The colorful rock layers below it are some of the sedimentary rocks created before the Tower formed. NPS photo

## Columnar Jointing

ARGUABLY, THE MOST STRIKING feature of the Tower is the collection of massive vertical columns which comprise the formation. These columns appear as lines and grooves on the faces of Devils Tower. Although one may think that this appearance is due to the weathering of rock over time, the phenomenon of columnar jointing is actually one that occurs as the rock itself is forming. While other spectacular examples of these formations are found around the world, the columns at the Tower are unique.

The formation of columns in rock is known as columnar jointing. It only occurs in igneous rocks, as the shapes form during the cooling process. As molten rock cools it contracts. This contraction stresses the rock as it solidifies, causing it to pull itself in different directions. Stress points form and cracks radiate from those points.

The shapes which form from these cracks are typically hexagonal with some variation. The result is a complex, interlocking pattern of columns.

A common analog to this occurrence is drying mud. As the saturated earth dries, it begins to crack open. Polygon shapes appear as the mud hardens, leaving behind a geometric pattern in the cracked surface.

Columns are generally seen in extrusive rock, meaning it formed out of a lava flow on the Earth’s surface. The rock of Devils Tower, however, is intrusive: it formed from magma cooling below the surface. One of the primary differences between magma and lava is the rate at which they cool. A slower rate of cooling results in larger columns.

Other famous column formations, such as Devils Postpile National Monument

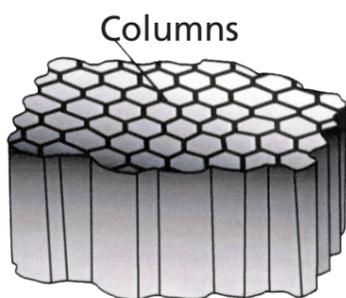
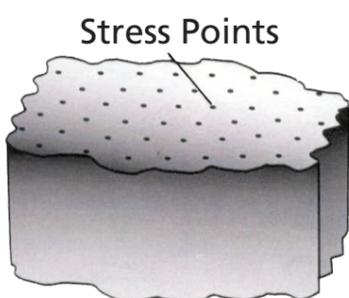
in California and Giant’s Causeway in Northern Ireland, are extrusive rock (basalt). The columns vary in size, but can be dozens of feet tall and over a foot wide. Since the columns of Devils Tower formed more slowly, they are ten times that size – hundreds of feet tall and 10-15 feet wide. Devils Tower boasts the largest columns in the world.

Since many column formations are made of basalt, early geologists assumed the Tower was as well. However, further study indicated this was not basalt. The rock of Devils Tower is actually phonolite porphyry, an intrusive rock which lacks the common mineral quartz.

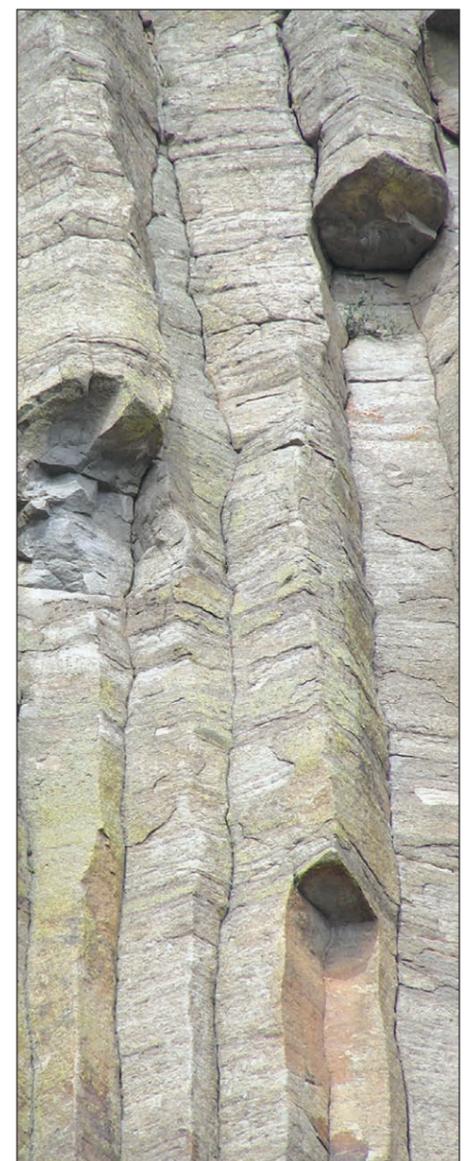
### How Often Do Columns Fall?

The exact date of the last major column fall is unknown. Small rocks, basketball size or smaller, do fall regularly.

Evidence of column fall is all around. Many of these pieces are heavily weathered or buried by soil, indicating they have been there for millennia. The boulder field at the base of the Tower is comprised of eroded pieces of the formation. No one in recorded history has seen one of those giant rocks fall from the Tower.



The shapes you see today are a result of columnar jointing. As liquid magma cooled to solid rock, the columns of the Tower began to take form. The process is similar to drying mud.



Most columns are hexagonal (6-sided), but can vary from 3 to 8 sides. NPS photo

# Indigenous Communities and the Tower Site

NATIVE AMERICANS ARE ACTIVE stakeholders in the use and management of Devils Tower National Monument. Archeological finds along the Belle Fourche River within the park confirm that humans were present in this area at least 10,000 years ago. The descendents of those people are known today as the Northern Plains Tribes.

Over two dozen federally recognized tribes are associated with the Tower. Six nations are considered to have the most direct historic and geographic ties to the site: Arapaho, Cheyenne, Crow, Kiowa, Lakota, and Shoshone.

Much focus has been given to the oral histories these tribes have about their connections to the Tower. Words such as “myth” and “legend” are frequently used to describe these stories, but the appropriate term is sacred narrative –

stories which explain how the world and people came to be. Cultures throughout the world have sacred narratives and ascribe them great importance. We hold these stories in reverence, as they connect us to places, events, and our ancestors from whom they came.

The different tribes of the Tower each have their own oral histories about the site. These differences represent the diversity of cultures connected to the place. Common elements are shared between many oral histories, such as bears clawing into the Tower or a specific number of people in the story (seven is common and considered a sacred number by some native cultures). The star knowledge of many tribes is connected to the Tower through these oral histories.



Prayer bundles come in different styles and colors. The most common are red, yellow, white, black, blue and green. NPS image



Tribal representatives on the Tower Trail consulting with park staff about a trail improvement project. NPS photo

American Indian oral histories are only a part of tribal connections to the Tower site. In the simplest terms, this is viewed as a place where the physical and spiritual worlds connect. Native people visit this place not only to connect with their past, but to perpetuate their culture today and into the future. The summer solstice in mid-June is a common time for indigenous groups to practice their cultural traditions. Prayer and purification ceremonies, as well as other rites of passage, frequently occur here.

The most visible element of native connections to the Tower are prayer bundles. As you walk the trails of the park, you may notice colorful cloths attached to the trees. These

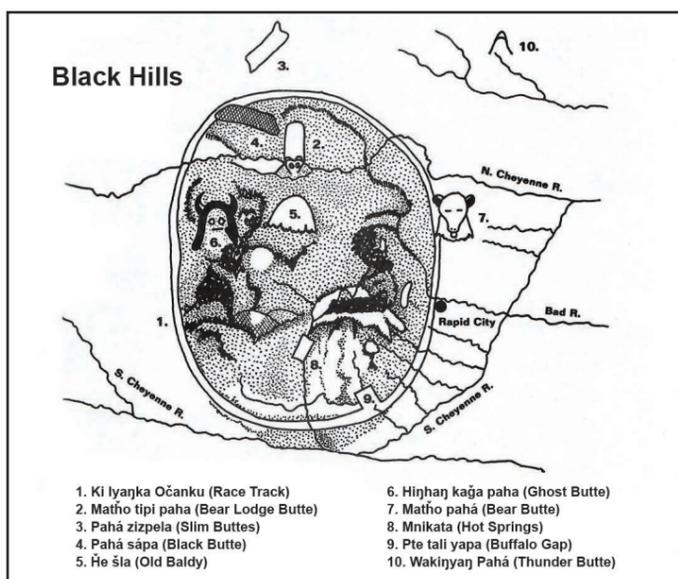
are offerings left by native people which represent prayers. The colors, placement, and contents have significance for the person who made them. Be respectful of these artifacts and do not disturb or photograph them. Do not leave other items behind, as prayer bundles are a part of the cultural landscape of this site.

The Tower is one of many places throughout the Black Hills and Northern Plains that has a cultural significance to native people. As you travel the region, reflect that you are moving through a landscape which has been home to people since time immemorial. Their descendents are still a part of that landscape today. Their presence here is a critical part of our history and modern society.

## HOW THE TOWER GOT ITS NAME

### From “Bear Lodge” to “Devils Tower”

Place names are a reflection of culture. In the 1850s, the Lakotas were the dominant culture of the Black Hills. The first US government map of the area, drawn in 1857, named the Tower as “Bear Lodge.” This is an English translation of a Lakota name. Less than 20 years later, Lakotas and other indigenous cultures of the Black Hills were being removed by the United States. In 1875, US Army Colonel Richard Dodge escorted a geologic expedition into the Black Hills. The following year he published a book using his observations and journal entries from that trip. In it, he wrote that “the Indians call this place ‘bad god’s tower,’” which he modified into “Devil’s Tower.” Despite several maps and sources labeling the formation as Bear Lodge, the new name stuck.



This map is a reproduction of one drawn by Amos Bad Heart Bull, an Oglala Lakota historian, circa 1900. It shows the Black Hills and other locations throughout the region important to Lakota people, with the traditional names of those places. Bear Lodge Butte (#2), or Devils Tower, is shown in the northern part of the circle which encompasses the Black Hills. ©University of Nebraska Press

1. Ki Iyanka Očanku (Race Track)
2. Matho tipi paha (Bear Lodge Butte)
3. Pahá zizpela (Slim Buttes)
4. Pahá sápa (Black Butte)
5. He Sía (Old Baldy)
6. Hihjan kaža paha (Ghost Butte)
7. Matho pahá (Bear Butte)
8. Mnikata (Hot Springs)
9. Pte tali yapa (Buffalo Gap)
10. Wakinyan Pahá (Thunder Butte)

## An Ongoing Controversy

Dodge’s journal entry seems to indicate a mistranslation. Some believe he simply invented a new name for the place. Historical precedent supports either theory: one can find examples around the world of place names changing, either intentionally or by mistake, when new cultures enter an area. Regardless, the name “Devils Tower” is one of great controversy. Many stakeholders, especially indigenous peoples, want the name changed; many others do not. The National Park Service has no authority to change the name of the formation or the park. Instead, we tell the story behind the name. How do you feel about the name “Devils Tower”? Explore the visitor center or talk with park staff to learn more about this story. It is a reflection of our history, of cultures colliding; the conversations we can have today about this issue are a reflection of our present and future.

## MAKING A NATIONAL MONUMENT

### Early Conservation

As European Americans pushed west and laid claim to their new country, advocates for preservation urged for protection of areas like Devils Tower. While much of the federal land was given or sold to railroads and settlers, areas which came to be known as national parks were kept for the public benefit. Although the early parks protected the country’s natural beauty, growing concern over the loss of cultural history led to the passing of the Antiquities Act of 1906.

The Antiquities Act was drafted to allow the president to declare “objects of historic or scientific interest... as national monuments.” A national park is created by Congress, and some feared that the legislative process would move too slowly to protect prehistoric sites like southwestern cliff dwellings. The Antiquities Act bypassed this process by granting the executive power to create national monuments. President Theodore Roosevelt, already an ardent conservationist, would go on to designate 18 national monuments in just over a year.

### The First National Monument

The first of those monuments would be Devils Tower. Although not recognized as a cultural site at the time, Roosevelt’s proclamation hinged on the Tower as a place of “scientific interest” due to its unique geology. Some say President Roosevelt broadened the intent of the Antiquities Act with this first designation. The debate over a president’s authority to declare national monuments surfaced in subsequent administrations and continues today. Regardless, a precedent was set by Roosevelt and used to protect many areas for the public good. Some of the most famous national parks, such as Zion, Acadia, and Grand Canyon, started as national monuments.



Theodore Roosevelt was the 26th President of the United States. He protected over 200 million acres of public lands.

The creation of Devils Tower National Monument began years before the Antiquities Act and President Roosevelt. When Wyoming became a state in 1890, Senator Francis Warren attempted to create a national park to protect Devils Tower. Although his bill failed, the land around the Tower was kept as a federal forest reserve for over a decade. It was still under federal control in 1906, allowing for Wyoming Representative Frank Mondell to lobby the president to declare Devils Tower the first national monument. On September 24, 1906, President Roosevelt signed the proclamation protecting the Tower for generations to come.

Millions of people from around the world enjoy the legacy of preservation and conservation established in the United States. On your travels, consider how decisions made by previous generations have impacted your life; consider how your decisions will impact future generations.

# Rock Climbing

CLIMBING HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF THE NATIONAL MONUMENT'S history. It has been a source of challenge, inspiration, excitement, enjoyment, and controversy. Today the Tower is recognized as one of the world's premier crack climbing destinations.

## CLIMBING HISTORY

The first known climbs of the Tower were done using wood pegs hammered into a crack in the rock. This wooden ladder was built in 1893 by Bill Rogers and Willard Ripley, ranchers and recent settlers to the area. The last recorded use of the ladder was in 1927 by Babe "The Human Fly" White. Shortly thereafter, the Park Service removed the bottom 300 feet of the ladder due to safety concerns. A 200-foot long section can still be seen on the southeast face of the Tower today.

In 1937, Fritz Wiessner became the first to ascend Devils Tower using modern rock climbing techniques. He and two other climbers ascended the cracks of the Tower using only their hands and feet. With rope and a few pitons for protection, the trio proved that the formation was indeed climbable. Throughout the following decades, climbing development continued at the Tower. By the 1980s, rock climbing was no longer an exception; it was now a popular form of recreation.



A climber uses the stemming technique on the El Matador route of Devils Tower. NPS photo

## MODERN ROCK CLIMBING

The majority of climbing routes at Devils Tower follow the cracks between columns. To ascend, climbers jam their hands, feet, and occasionally their whole body into the cracks. As they climb, they place removable protection (spring-loaded camming devices, or "cams"), into the crack, and clip their rope to them. Climbers typically climb in parties of two or three, the lead climber placing the cams while the second climber belays (manages the slack in the rope via a friction device). Once the leader has reached the end of the rope, they make an anchor and belay the second climber up. The second climber removes the protection as they ascend.

To descend, climbers must rappel, or lower themselves down using their rope. Permanent anchors exist on descent routes. To rappel, climbers thread half of their rope through the permanent anchor. Then they lower themselves on both strands down to the next anchor. They retrieve their rope by pulling one strand from below. On average, climbing parties take 6-8 hours to reach the summit and also rappel back down.



Temporary anchors used by climbers are reliable and removable. NPS photo

## CLIMBING MANAGEMENT

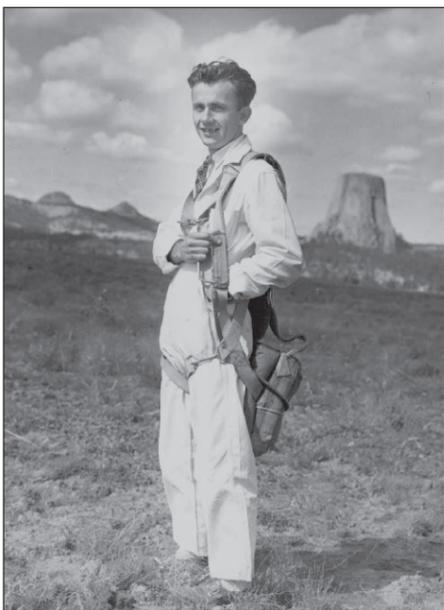
The park implemented a Climbing Management Plan in 1995. This plan strikes a balance between the cultural, natural, and recreational values of the Tower site. A voluntary closure to the area inside the Tower Trail occurs every June out of respect to cultural practices of the 26 associated tribes. The National Park Service strongly encourages climbers to respect the June climbing closure. Sections of the Tower are closed annually to protect nesting falcons. To reduce resource damage caused by pitons, climbers use minimum impact techniques (i.e. cams and other clean climbing equipment).

Climbing is dangerous. If you do not have the experience or equipment to rock climb, do not attempt to climb Devils Tower. Please talk with a ranger if you have questions about climbing in the park.

# Devils Tower George

IN OCTOBER 1941, DURING THE international upheaval and strife of the Second World War, Devils Tower National Monument made headlines across the nation. A professional parachutist named George Hopkins was stuck atop the Tower with no way down.

Early in the morning on October 1, 1941, without the consent or knowledge of National Park Service officials, Hopkins parachuted from an airplane to the top of Devils Tower. He wanted to prove that a parachutist could land precisely on a small target – the Tower summit being just over one acre in size.



George Hopkins. NPS photo

His plan was to descend using a 1,000-foot rope which would be dropped from the plane after him. Hopkins hit his mark, but his rope landed out of reach on the side of the Tower, leaving him stuck on top.

The National Park Service now had a problem to solve, and newspapers around the country ran with the story. While they considered options for rescuing the stranded man, airplanes dropped food, water, and warm clothing to keep Hopkins alive. Letters written by concerned citizens, corporations, and the military suggested innovative ideas for getting him down. These suggestions included everything from using a blimp to requesting the use of an experimental helicopter. Eventually they decided on sending a climbing team up to rescue Hopkins. Jack Durrance, one of the early technical climbers to scale the Tower, offered to lead a rescue party that included several famous climbers including Chappell Cranmer and Paul Petzoldt.

On October 5, Durrance and his party arrived at the monument. Working closely with the park service, they laid out a safe climbing route for rescue operations. On the following day, Durrance led the team to the summit of the Tower. They found Hopkins who, in spite of his ordeal, was in excellent physical condition and in good spirits.

The descent was made without major incident. The stranded parachutist and the rescue operations attracted many spectators: during the six-day period, some 7,000 visitors came to the monument to witness events first-hand.

George Hopkins' ill-fated jump onto Devils Tower has become a famous part of the park's history. Hopkins himself went on to train military personnel in the art of parachuting – likely with advice on how to make a backup plan!

## Check Out that Climber!

Did you photograph any climbers today? Or did you climb and wonder if someone took your picture? Post your pictures of Devils Tower climbers to Instagram tagged with "#DevilsTowerClimbersMM/DD/YY" using the date you photographed!



Members of the rescue party in the visitor center planning their ascent. Paul Petzoldt stands at the far left; Jack Durrance leaning over at far right. NPS photo

# Animals of Devils Tower

THE NATIONAL MONUMENT IS ONLY 2.15 square miles in area. However, it is home to a variety of animal life. Some of our residents are easy to spot, but many are elusive critters!

## PRAIRIE DOGS

Black-tailed prairie dogs, the most common of the five prairie dog species, find a home in the valley below the Tower. Prairie dogs are burrowing squirrels that live in large colonies called towns. Their towns form extensive networks of tunnels beneath



Prairie dogs have a complex communication system that involves vocal calls and amusing body language. NPS photo

the prairie, and abandoned tunnels can provide habitat for other species. Named for their high-pitched bark, they communicate and work as a group to evade predators. With short, muscular legs and long-nailed toes on their feet, they are well equipped for their burrowing lifestyle.

Prairie dogs are a keystone species of their ecosystem. They provide a

food source for almost every predator around: badgers, bobcats, coyotes, eagles, falcons, foxes, hawks, owls, snakes, and more all rely on these ground squirrels for food. Other animals, including mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians utilize the burrows for habitat. Deer are common in the dog town at the park; larger protected habitats like Wind Cave and Badlands National Parks see bison and elk frequent prairie dog towns to graze the nutrient-rich plants.

## DEER

Visitors to the park can observe two distinct deer species: white-tailed and mule. The former are so named for their warning system, with a snow-white tail that stands erect as they sprint away from danger. The latter have a black tip on the end of their tail, as well as larger ears and a bouncing spring when moving quickly.

In summer, white-tailed deer have auburn colored fur, while mule deer maintain a light brown coat all year. The antlers of the two species grow differently as well. Mule deer antlers are bifurcated, meaning they fork multiple times and can have more points. White-tailed antlers grow from a single beam, with all points stemming from the main growth.

## PEREGRINE FALCONS

The fastest animal in the world finds a home at Devils Tower. Actually, it finds a home on Devils Tower! Every year, peregrine falcons return to the Tower to establish a nesting site. This typically



A mating pair of peregrine falcons soaring around the Tower. NPS photo

happens by early April. They enjoy the rocky outcrops on the Tower's sides, as well as the many small birds which roost and nest on the formation. Peregrines can be seen at the Tower through August, soaring casually on the warm air currents – until they spot some unsuspecting prey! Their dives have been recorded at over 200 miles per hour as they careen downward into a mid-air collision. They train their young to hunt by dropping food from high altitude and allowing the juveniles to dive and catch. Not to be confused with the larger (and lazier) turkey

vulture, peregrines have a high-pitched call you can hear along the Tower Trail.

## BULLSNAKES

The most common snake species found here, bullsnakes feed on rodents, birds, and even other snakes! They are known to eat or drive away the smaller prairie rattlesnake (the only venomous snake species in the Black Hills). If you see a snake along the Tower Trail during your visit, chances are it is a bullsnake. They can grow to over six feet long, and have a yellow color with brown mottling that turns to rings near the tail. Excellent climbers, bullsnakes can be seen winding up trees to look for bird or squirrel nests.

## OTHER CRITTERS

Many animals are not seen, but signs of their presence are everywhere. Porcupines leave chew marks on ponderosa pine trees. Badgers leave fresh dirt mounds from excavating prairie dog burrows. A fox print can be found along Red Beds Trail, or coyotes heard in early morning and late evening. This small protected habitat is just that: a tiny sanctuary for a complex ecosystem of interconnected animals.



Bullsnakes are commonly seen along the Tower Trail in early summer. NPS photo

# Protecting Bats



A bat with White-nose Syndrome. NPS photo

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, BAT POPULATIONS HAVE BEEN IN DECLINE. Wind turbine fatalities, habitat loss, disease, and other human-induced effects have contributed to the loss of many bat species throughout North America. Although some hold a negative stigma against bats, they are actually important creatures to the human world. Most bats in North America are insectivorous, meaning they feed on insects. A decrease in the number of bats results in the increase of pests that impact agricultural crops, moths, and beetles. Beyond the economic impact of disappearing bats, these animals are critical parts of the ecosystem.

One of the most recent discoveries at Devils Tower National Monument is the presence of White-nose syndrome (WNS). This disease is caused by a fungus, which grows on the faces and wings of infected bats. The white fungus interrupts bat hibernation in the winter, causing the animals to burn through their stored energy when there are no insects for them to eat. WNS was first discovered in New York state in 2006 and has steadily spread across the country. Millions of bats have died, and entire colonies have been completely wiped out.

With a mandate to protect our wildlife, the National Park Service has been at the forefront of combating WNS. Devils Tower National Monument has been studying bats within the park for several years. We have identified 11 bat species, including one heavily impacted by WNS. This species and is now listed as threatened: The Northern long-eared bat. Concern over the disease's spread and

the health of our bats remains high, and our staff works with other parks and agencies to monitor the animals.

Devils Tower National Monument staff are currently working on developing methodologies that will study the relationship between WNS and recreation at the Tower. These methodologies seek to answer questions. Do hikers, climbers, and visitors of Devils Tower play a role in transferring the fungus that causes WNS? If so, what type of impact does this have? To answer these questions, park rangers will be regularly climbing the Tower, inspecting the boulder fields, and making observations to study WNS and how the fungus spreads.

The monument encourages visitors to report bat sightings. These reports help us learn where bats are roosting on the Tower itself. We also educate monument visitors on preventing the spread of WNS. Although the disease is primarily spread from bat to bat, fungal spores can be spread by people via clothing or gear that has been used in a cave or other WNS-positive sites. Like many diseases, stopping WNS is most easily done by preventing its spread.

Without bats, the world would be a less healthy —and a less interesting —place.

For more information on bats of Devils Tower, please visit [nps.gov/deto](http://nps.gov/deto). For more information on WNS specifically, please visit [whitenosesyndrome.org](http://whitenosesyndrome.org).

If you see a bat during the day during your visit to Devils Tower National Monument, please report the sighting to a ranger or call us at (307) 467-5283.



# Flowering Plants

DID YOU KNOW THAT FRUITS AND FLOWERS ARE ADAPTATIONS TO HELP plants survive? Scents and colors attract the animals necessary for that plant to reproduce. Flowers encourage pollinators like bees and butterflies to visit, while fruits encourage animals to consume that part of the plant and distribute the seeds within.

Although we enjoy the beauty of flowering plants, what we really see is a clever way that plants use other organisms for their own benefit. Of course, that benefit is mutual – animals (including humans) get food via a plant’s fruit and flowers, and they help ensure that those plants continue to provide food for future generations by playing a part in the plant’s reproduction.

The table below lists a few common flowers you might see at the park. You can look these up yourself to confirm your sightings, or stop at the visitor center to see a guidebook with pictures.

Remember that all things in your national parks are protected. Picking flowers is destructive and illegal. Leave flowers growing where you find them, and they will return for future generations to enjoy.



Seasonal Flowering Plants at Devils Tower			
Month	Color	Name	Location
April to May	Light purple	Pasqueflower	Tower Trail, Joyner Ridge Trail
May July to August	White Dark red or black berry	Chokecherry	Visitor center parking area
May to June	Dark purple or blue	Low larkspur	Tower Trail
May to June September	Yellow Blue berry	Oregon Grape	Tower Trail, park road
June	Yellow	Goldenpea	Tower Trail, Red Beds Trail
June to July	Orange	Scarlet globemallow	Prairie dog town
June to July	White	Sego lily	Joyner Ridge Trail
June to July	Yellow or orange	Pricklypear cactus	Red Beds Trail, prairie dog town
June to July	White	Yucca	Red Beds Trail, prairie dog town
June to July	Pink	Showy milkweed	Park road, prairie dog town
June to September	Purple	Harebell	Tower Trail, Red Beds Trail

Top row from left: pasqueflower; goldenpea.  
Bottom row from left: scarlet globemallow; pricklypear cactus; yucca; harebell.  
NPS photos



## Prescribed Fire

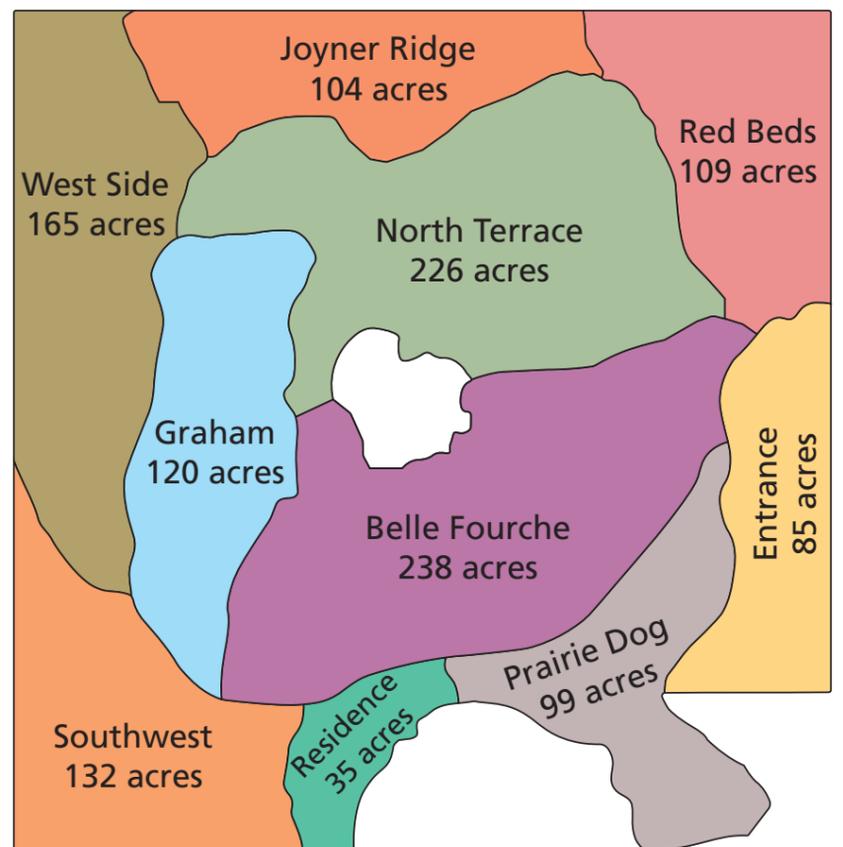
AS YOU EXPLORE THE MONUMENT, YOU MAY NOTICE THAT SOME OF THE tree trunks are blackened. The black markings are the result of fire. In almost all cases, the fires at Devils Tower National Monument are started intentionally by park management. We call these intentional burns prescribed fires. Vegetation on the north side of the Tower, the North Terrace, was last burned in 2017 and on the south side of the Tower, the Belle Fourche Unit, was last burned in 2013.

Fire, despite the instinctual fear, is a healthy part of the ecosystem. Ponderosa pine, the dominant tree in the park, needs fire for successful growth. Fire creates space and returns nutrients into the soil, both of which promote ecosystem health. The sap and thick bark of ponderosa trees make them fire resistant, and as the trees mature the lowest branches drop to prevent the fire from crowning.

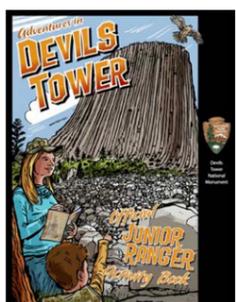
Animals like black-backed woodpeckers and northern long-eared bats take advantage of fresh burns to find food and shelter. In the weeks and months after a fire, deer and other grazers enjoy the abundance of fresh growth as plants sprout through the ashes.

For many decades fires were suppressed. This led to an overgrowth in forests and build up of fuels. These conditions lead to dangerous fires that burn hotter, longer, and over larger areas. In addition to the dangers to life and property, the health of ecosystems began to suffer. By the second half of the 1900s, it was realized that land managers can use fire as a tool.

To promote the benefits and to limit the negative effects of fire on the ecosystems, the National Park Service conducts prescribed fires at the Tower. These burns involve years of monitoring and planning. As a small park, we rely on staff from other state and federal agencies to help plan and execute prescribed burns. Many employees at Devils Tower are cross-trained to participate in prescribed fires.



Burn units of Devils Tower National Monument. Roads, trails, and rivers can all help establish and separate these units. A specific unit is typically burned every 15-20 years.



### WELCOME NEW JUNIOR RANGERS!

DEVILS TOWER IS EXCITED FOR YOUR CONTINUED education and development as a steward of the nation’s first monument and all the four hundred plus national park sites. This family program will help you learn about the park and reward you with an official Junior Ranger badge! Stop at the visitor center for a booklet or download an electronic copy with a QR code from our official website.

Instructions for earning your badge are in the Junior Ranger booklet. Complete the same number of activities as your age, if you are 12 or over, do all the pages. Thank you for expanding on your knowledge and experience in concepts of conservation.

Explore, learn, and protect your park by becoming the next Devils Tower Junior Ranger!

# Your Fee Dollars at Work

THE FEES YOU PAY TO ENTER AND CAMP AT DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL Monument directly support the park and improve your experiences here. Under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), the park retains eighty percent of these fees, and the other 20 percent is used to benefit parks that do not collect fees. Subsequently, the fees collected at Devils Tower fund items such as ranger programs, park maps & brochures, and maintenance projects such as replacing sprinkler heads in the visitor center, rehabilitating historic structures, and resurfacing the Tower Trail. Additionally, FLREA monies fund staff that directly contribute to your experience. Two-thirds of the Devils Tower staff are funded with FLREA monies. These positions range from climbing rangers to maintenance workers to campground staff.

## \$5.2 MILLION PROJECT TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY

Major improvements to the accessibility of trails, exhibits, parking, and restrooms were completed in July 2021 at Devils Tower National Monument. It is the first major upgrade to the park's infrastructure since the mid-1950s, when annual visitation was about 130,000 compared to over 500,000 now. The project enhanced accessibility for visitors and brought the park into compliance with federal accessibility laws and regulations. Superintendent Amnesty Kochanowski said, "We want all people to be able to experience the nation's first national monument. The design team employed universal design principles which maximizes usability for everyone." A new accessible route from the visitor center area to the base of the Tower was built, including three plazas and an overlook, a pavilion, and a bus drop-off. Large vehicle parking was extended, existing restrooms upgraded, and an accessible vault toilet was added. Exhibits in the visitor center and signs along the Tower Trail were also redesigned as part of the \$5.2 million project. The majority of the project was funded with entrance and campground fees. Featured are captioned and audio described films, and tactile maps and models for visitors who are deaf and/or blind, among other

users. The accessible exhibits and signs were designed in collaboration with the National Center on Accessibility at Indiana University. Key stakeholders were consulted throughout the project, including people with disabilities, tribal leaders, and the local business community. Kochanowski said it was a challenging, and worthy project. "After nearly a decade of planning, project execution ran into delays throughout the past year and a half. We thank the community and visitors for their patience during construction. Ultimately, the objective of the project was achieved! Park staff and I are grateful to be able to share this special place with all people."

In addition to the dramatic improvements in accessibility, the project corrected \$1.4 million of the park's \$6 million in maintenance backlog.



Accessible Tower Trail and tactile models of the Tower. NPS photo

## Powder River Group

DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL Monument is one of four parks in the Powder River Group. The other three are Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, Fort Laramie National Historic Site, and Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. These parks are linked by the common geography and human history of the Powder River country.

The four Powder River Group parks show the diversity of the National Park Service. Whether you are interested in history, wildlife viewing, ranger programs, recreation, or beautiful scenery, you can find them at one of these sites. Some are off the beaten path, while others might be along your travel route! Escape the crowds and find a new park in the beautiful Powder River country.

Ask at the visitor center for a regional or state map. Explore the many wonders of the Powder River Group!



Bighorn Canyon straddles the Wyoming and Montana borders. NPS photo

### BIGHORN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Bighorn Canyon offers stunning views of its namesake river, over 1,000 feet below the canyon rim. It is home to feral horses and diverse wildlife, including bighorn sheep and black bear. It is also a popular place for boating and fishing. Traveling from the Tower to Yellowstone, you will drive right by this hidden gem of a park.



The restored Old Bedlam building at Fort Laramie National Historic Site. NPS photo

### FORT LARAMIE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Fort Laramie represents a crossroads of history and culture. Originally a trading post in 1834, it soon became a central location for US military operations and westward settlers. It was the site of major treaty negotiations with indigenous nations. The fort and other buildings are maintained today to bring alive this rich history.



Artist depiction of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. NPS photo

### LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL MONUMENT

The Battle of the Little Bighorn was a major event in the histories of the United States, Lakota, Cheyenne, and Crow nations. The national monument memorializes the warriors who fought and died on both sides of the conflict. Visit a national cemetery for the 7th US Cavalry division or tour the battlefield to visualize how the conflict unfolded.

## Cashless Park Entry Fee Payment Option



### Stay connected via social media!

 [facebook.com/devilstower.nps](https://www.facebook.com/devilstower.nps)

 [#DevilsTowerNPS](https://www.instagram.com/DevilsTowerNPS)

 NPS App

### Fees & Passes Info

Devils Tower National Monument Passes:

- 7-day vehicle pass: \$25
- 7-day motorcycle pass: \$20
- 7-day pedestrian pass: \$15
- Devils Tower Annual Pass: \$45

National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Passes:

- Interagency Annual Pass: \$80
- Interagency Senior Annual Pass: \$20
- Interagency Senior Lifetime Pass: \$80

Devils Tower Camping Fees:

- Standard Site: \$20/night
- With Senior or Access Pass: \$10/night
- Group Site: \$30/night

### DEVILS TOWER NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Our cooperating association is Devils Tower Natural History Association (DTNHA). Since 1958, this non-profit partner has helped to promote the understanding and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of the monument. DTNHA operates the bookstore inside of the park visitor center. The money you spend there directly supports park operations. Whether it is Junior Ranger supplies, supporting park volunteers, the visitor guide you are reading now, or improving park facilities, the association helps fund critical projects and materials that directly benefit you, the visitor. Thank you DTNHA!

You can become a member of DTNHA today! Enjoy a 15% discount at our bookstore, as well a discounts at other park cooperating associations. Simply inquire at the register, or visit their website ([www.devilstowernha.org](http://www.devilstowernha.org)) for more information. The DTNHA website also includes an online store with all their merchandise available for purchase.

[www.devilstowernha.org](http://www.devilstowernha.org)  
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