

Death Valley National Park

National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior



Visitor Guide
Fall 2011



Welcome to Death Valley!

Please visit our newly renovated Furnace Creek Visitor Center. This important project, funded by entrance fee income, is leading us to have a lighter footprint in our desert home. Increased insulation, improved air conditioning systems, and solar panels that help us to generate our own power are all part of this project that allows us to be more sustainable in this harsh environment. The Visitor Center renovation, which started in November 2010, was finished earlier than anticipated allowing us to accommodate our growing number of visitors. Our park partner, Death Valley Natural History Association, is quite happy to have a more comfortable space to offer a wider selection of books and items you can take home with you to remind you of your Death Valley experience. The Visitor Center exhibits are production and are expected to be installed in the summer of 2012. In the meantime, take a look at our temporary exhibits and watch the new park film, narrated by actor Donald Sutherland.

Death Valley seems to get busier each year, with barely a lull between our seasons. In 2010, visitation increased by about 15% and we expect one million visitors for the first time since 2001! We are excited that so many people are visiting our National Parks and hope that while you are here, you will take the time to enjoy a ranger program, gaze at an amazing night sky, and look at the footprints of a tiny lizard left behind in the sand of the Mesquite Dunes. This is your National Park. Please take care of it and enjoy it.



*Sarah Craighead, Superintendent
Death Valley National Park*

Virtual Museum

The National Park Service (NPS) has launched a multimedia "Virtual Museum" exhibit highlighting hundreds of artifacts from Death Valley National Park's museum collections. These items tell the stories of people drawn to this land of startling and stark beauty, scorching valleys, snow-capped peaks, borax mines, and the grandly furnished Scotty's Castle. The Virtual Museum showcases artifacts, artwork, documents, photos, specimens, and more. There is a virtual tour of Scotty's Castle with an organ music clip and "Teaching with Museum Collections," which includes lesson plans for teachers.

The park's Virtual Museum Exhibit is on-line at www.nps.gov/history/museum/exhibits/deva/index.html. Death Valley National Park manages nearly one million museum objects, specimens, and archives. The majority of these collections are professionally stored and cared for at the Cow Creek Curatorial Facility and at Scotty's Castle. For more information, please visit our website or call (760) 786-3200.



What's Inside?

Park Rules	2
Park Information	3
What To See	4
Day Hikes & Backroads.....	5
Park Map.....	6 & 7
Park Projects	8
Ranger Programs	9
Scotty's Castle.....	10
Park Partners.....	11
Visitor Services.....	12

Park Rules

Entrance Fees

Please stop at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center, Scotty's Castle Visitor Center, Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station or at one of the automated fee machines placed throughout the park to pay the park entrance fee.

7 day pass:		Annual pass:	
1 Vehicle and all passengers	\$20	Death Valley annual pass	\$40
Individual on motorcycle, bicycle, or on foot	\$10	Interagency annual pass	\$80
Commercial vehicle by capacity:		Interagency senior pass <i>(Lifetime pass for U.S. citizens 62+)</i>	\$10
1-6	\$25+\$10 per person	Interagency access pass <i>(Lifetime pass for U.S. citizens with disability)</i>	Free
7-15	\$75	National Park passes honored:	
16-25	\$100	<i>Golden Age & Golden Access</i>	
26+	\$200		

Rules to Live by in Your National Park

Many park rangers are federal law enforcement officers. They help protect the park and its visitors by enforcing a wide range of federal, state and local regulations. You can help them by observing these laws:

- Obey the **speed limit** and other rules of the road. **Helmets and seatbelts are required** in Death Valley National Park.
- **Stay out of closed areas.** Mines, service roads, and other areas are closed for your safety or the protection of features therein.
- **Let wild animals find their own food.** They're good at it and feeding them is against the law.
- Rocks, plants, animals, and historic objects in Death Valley are protected just like in a museum. **Vandalism and theft are prohibited.**
- **Keep your car on established roads.** Unsightly tire tracks in the desert destroy fragile plants and wildlife and scar the landscape for decades.
- **Camp only in established campgrounds or in a permitted backcountry area.** Check at a Ranger Station or Visitor Center for backcountry camping information.
- **It is illegal to discharge a firearm anywhere in Death Valley or to bring one into a Federal building.**
- **Keep pets on leash and close to roads or parking lots.** Pets are not allowed on trails or in wilderness.
- **Put garbage where it belongs.** Litter in the desert spoils the landscape for each person that follows behind you.
- **Campfires are allowed in established firepits only.** Gathering firewood is prohibited.

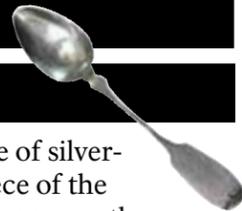


Damage caused by off-road driving



Cars destroyed by flash flood.

Don't Steal Our "Silverware"



While visiting the White House, would you take a piece of silverware home for a keepsake? How about tearing off a piece of the Declaration of Independence? Or spray painting your name on the Statue of Liberty?

Believe it or not these acts of vandalism do happen in our national parks. Picking wildflowers, taking home stones or arrowheads as keepsakes, and defacing canyon walls with graffiti are all actions that degrade the parks for other visitors. In addition, it's against the law.



The Racetrack

Visiting any of our national parks is similar to visiting museums or art galleries. You certainly wouldn't think of taking an artifact or painting home from such places. Removing anything from our national parks means that other visitors will not be able to enjoy it. If each of the 275 million visitors took away a flower or a stone or anything from the parks they visit, they would leave behind empty landscapes.

Help protect America's national parks by leaving everything in its place and not defacing the natural resources. Other park visitors and future generations will thank you.

Personal Survival In a Land of Extremes



- **Water:** Drink at least one gallon (4 liters) of water per day to replace loss from perspiration. Carry plenty of extra drinking water in your car.
- **Heat & Dehydration:** If you feel dizzy, nauseous or get a headache, get out of the sun immediately and drink plenty of water. Dampen clothing to lower your body temperature. Heat and dehydration can kill.
- **Hiking:** Do not hike in the low elevations when temperatures are hot.
- **Dangerous Creatures:** Never place your hands or feet where you cannot see first. Rattlesnakes, scorpions or black widow spiders may be sheltered there.
- **Mine Hazards:** Do not enter mine tunnels or shafts. Mines may be unstable, have hidden shafts, pockets of bad air and poisonous gas. **Stay Out Stay Alive.**
- **Flash Floods:** Avoid canyons during rain storms and be prepared to move to higher ground. While driving, be alert for water running in washes and across the road. Water can carry rocks and debris with it and may suddenly appear around the next curve in the roadway.

• **In Case of Emergency: Dial 911** from any telephone or cell phone. Cell phones may not work in many parts of the park, do not depend on them.



The main cause of death in Death Valley is single vehicle accidents.

Park Information

Backcountry: Read This Before You Go!



IN THE BACKCOUNTRY IT CAN TAKE A VERY LONG TIME TO GET HELP!

You've got two flat tires. Your cell phone doesn't work. Nobody knows where you are. You're not sure where you are. You haven't seen another car since you turned off the highway 12 hours ago. The only thing you can hear is the ringing in your ears. Is this how you thought it would end?

Most backcountry emergencies begin in fairly commonplace ways: your car gets a flat tire, you run out of gas, you sprain your ankle while on a hike, or you get disoriented and turned around in the desert landscape. Things that are easy to address in most places quickly become life-threatening emergencies in the backcountry as heat, cold, exhaustion, dehydration, isolation, and panic set in.

No matter what kind of adventure or experience you pursue in Death Valley, a little planning and caution will send you home with happy and fun-filled memories of your desert trip. Have a safe and inspiring visit to Death Valley by following these tips from the rangers:

- **Plan your visit:** Do you have the appropriate vehicle, tires, tools, camping gear, maps, and skills for your intended route? Do you have enough **fuel and water**? If you aren't sure, ask a ranger.
- **Be prepared:** If you're headed into the backcountry plan on changing a flat tire at least once. Check your rental car contract to see if you are covered should something happen to your car on an **unpaved** road. Have the necessary tools (*rental cars often lack the proper tire changing tools!*) and know how to use them.
- Bring food, water and other essentials for several days, even if you're planning a much shorter visit.
- **Don't rely on technology!** Your cell phone won't work in most of the park. Emergency locator beacons have a high failure rate. GPS devices frequently tell Death Valley visitors to turn off well-traveled roads, and take "shortcuts" over the desert and into isolated canyons. Common sense and good judgment are far more reliable.



Lippincott Road - Are you equipped?

- **Call someone at home and tell them specifically where you are going. Have them call (888) 233-6518 (Emergency Dispatch) if you do not return when expected:** It takes a long time to search 3.4 million acres of wilderness. We can find you faster if we know where to look and what we're looking for. Complete a backcountry hiker form at any visitor center to ensure that we have all the information needed to find you quickly.



Do you have the tools to change a tire?

Death Valley Mines

"The accounts of the abundance of gold [in California] are of such extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief were they not corroborated by the authentic reports of officers in the public service who have visited the mineral district."

-President James K. Polk's address to Congress, December 5, 1848

Stories of gold strikes in the newly-acquired territory of California had been published in the preceding months, but President Polk's official notice to Congress in 1848 sparked the California Gold Rush, enticing more than 250,000 people to join the search for riches over the next four years. Mining continued in Death Valley for over 150 years!



Saratoga Springs Mine

In 2009 America's national parks received \$750 million in stimulus money under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Death Valley was allocated \$4.8 million for mitigating hazardous mine conditions in some of the Park's most visited locations. During 2010 and 2011, this money was used for stabilization of the Keane Wonder Mine tramway, as well as mitigation of 235 hazardous mine openings at seven sites around the park:

- Keane Wonder Mine
- Eureka Mine
- Titus Canyon
- Gem Mine
- Skidoo
- Gower Gulch
- Greenwater Valley

Abandoned mine sites can pose numerous dangers to visitors, including bad air, unstable mine openings, collapsing mine structures and buildings, and contamination from heavy metals and chemicals used in the ore milling process. Visitors to Death Valley should be aware of these potential dangers and resist the temptation to enter mine openings or dilapidated structures.

Death Valley's last active mine closed in 2005 and the park is in the process of conducting an abandoned mine inventory to see how many mines exist within park boundaries. Though the inventory is ongoing, the park is estimated to have 6,000-10,000 mine features, with 2,000-3,000 of those being potentially hazardous mine openings. Death Valley is believed to possess the most abandoned mines of any single National Park Service unit.

While Keane Wonder remains closed, this past year saw the mitigation of 50 hazardous mine openings, plus the stabilization of multiple tram towers, and the upper and lower tram terminals. The other issue that still needs to be addressed is the environmental contaminants left behind from milling. The park is actively working towards resolving this issue and making the site suitable for visitation once again.



STAY OUT STAY ALIVE!



Keane Wonder Mine tramway

What to See

Furnace Creek Area

- **Badwater Basin:** The lowest point in North America, Badwater Basin is a surreal landscape of vast salt flats. A temporary lake may form here after heavy rainstorms. Do not walk on the salt flats in hot weather.
- **Dante's View:** The most breathtaking viewpoint in the park, this mountain-top overlook is more than 5000 feet above the floor of Death Valley. The paved access road is open to all vehicles less than 25 feet in length.



Harmony Borax Works



View of Badwater Basin from Dante's View

- **Harmony Borax Works:** Follow an easy 1/4 mile walking trail to learn about this important site in Death Valley's history. The Harmony Borax operation became famous through the use of 20 mule teams that moved borax from Death Valley to nearby communities.
- **Artist's Drive:** A scenic loop drive through multi-hued volcanic and sedimentary hills. Artist's Palette is especially photogenic in late afternoon light. The 9 mile paved road is one-way and is only drivable with vehicles less than 25 feet in length.
- **Devil's Golf Course:** An immense area of rock salt eroded by wind and rain into jagged spires. So incredibly serrated that "only the devil could play golf on such rough links." The unpaved road leading to it is often closed after rain.
- **Zabriskie Point:** Surrounded by a maze of wildly eroded and vibrantly colored badlands, this spectacular view is one of the park's most famous. Zabriskie Point is a popular sunrise and sunset viewing location. The viewpoint is a short walk uphill from the parking area.



Artists Drive



20-mule team

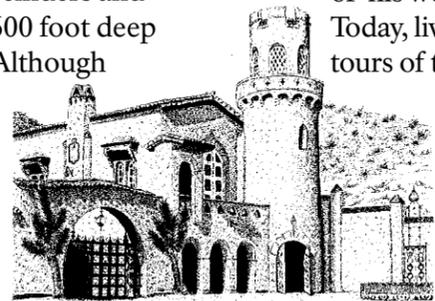
- **Twenty Mule Team Canyon:** Winding through otherworldly badlands, this 2.7 mile, one-way loop drive is unpaved, but accessible to vehicles other than buses, RV's, and trailers.

Scotty's Castle Area



Ubehebe Crater

- **Ubehebe Crater:** Just a few hundred years ago a massive volcanic explosion caused by magma mixing with an underground spring, shattered the silence of northern Death Valley. When the cinders and dust settled, this 600 foot deep crater remained. Although easily visible from the paved road, hikers may want to circle the crater rim to see smaller craters.
- **Scotty's Castle:** Prospector "Death Valley Scotty" claimed this elaborate Spanish-style mansion was built by gold from his fictitious mine. In reality, it was the 1920s vacation home of his wealthy friends. Today, living history tours of the castle's richly furnished interior are given by costumed park rangers.



Stovepipe Wells Area

- **Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes:** Tawny dunes smoothly rising nearly 100 feet from Mesquite Flat. Late afternoon light accentuates the ripples and patterns while morning is a good time to view tracks of nocturnal wildlife. Moonlight on the dunes can be magical, yet night explorers should be alert for sidewinder rattlesnakes during the warm season.
- **Salt Creek:** This stream of salty water is the only home to a rare pupfish, *Cyprinodon salinus*. Springtime is best for viewing pupfish; in summer the lower stream dries up and in winter the fish are not as active in Salt Creek. The wooden boardwalk loops 1/2 mile through stands of pickleweed and past pools reflecting badland hills. Wheelchair accessible.
- **Wildrose Charcoal Kilns:** These ten beehive-shaped structures are among the best preserved in the west. Built in 1876 to provide fuel to process silver/lead ore, they still smell of smoke today. The last 2 miles of gravel road to the kilns are passable to most vehicles.



Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes

Panamint Springs Area

- **Father Crowley Vista:** A landscape of dark lava flows and volcanic cinders abruptly gives way to the gash of Rainbow Canyon below this viewpoint. Walk the dirt track east of the parking lot for a grand overlook of the northern Panamint Valley.



Wildrose Charcoal Kilns

Day Hikes & Backroads

Things to Know Before You Go!

- **Before starting a hike:** learn the current conditions, water availability, and weather forecasts. Backpackers can obtain a free permit from any visitor center.
- **Always carry water.** Two liters for a short winter day hike; 4 liters or more in the summer or for longer hikes.
- **Constructed trails are rare in this park.** Trails are provided in places that are heavily used and sensitive to damage. If a trail is there, please use it. Most hiking routes in the park are cross-country, up canyons, or along ridges. Footing can be rough and rocky.
- **Hiking in low elevations** can be dangerous when it is hot. The high peaks can be covered with snow in winter and spring. The best time to hike in the park is October to April.
- **Dogs and bicycles** are not allowed on trails or in the wilderness.

Hiking Trails & Routes

Golden Canyon

Length: 1 mile, one-way.

Difficulty: easy

Start: Golden Canyon parking area, 2 miles south of Highway 190 on Badwater Road.

Description: Easy trail through colorful canyon. Red Cathedral located ¼ mile up canyon from last numbered marker. Interpretive trail guides are available.

Gower Gulch Loop

Length: 4 miles round-trip.

Difficulty: moderate

Start: Golden Canyon parking area, 2 miles south of Highway 190 on Badwater Road.

Description: Colorful badlands, canyon narrows, old borax mines. Hike up Golden Canyon to marker #10, then follow trail over badlands and down Gower Gulch to finish loop. Two easy dryfalls must be scrambled down. Ask for Gower Gulch handout at a visitor center.



Manly Beacon from Gower Gulch Loop

Badwater Salt Flats

Length: As long or short as you like (the salt flats are 5 miles one-way across).

Difficulty: easy to moderate; sections may be muddy or rough.

Start: Badwater parking area

Description: Follow the path out from Badwater Pool into the purity of white salt and the nation's lowest elevation at 282 feet below sea level. Avoid hiking here in the hot months due to the lack of shade and extreme temperatures.



Badwater Salt Flats

Natural Bridge Canyon

Length: ½ mile to natural bridge, 1 mile to end of canyon.

Difficulty: easy

Start: Natural Bridge parking area, 1.5 miles off Badwater Rd. on gravel road, 13 miles south of Highway 190.

Description: Uphill walk through the narrow canyon. Large natural bridge at ½ mile. Trail ends at dry waterfall.

Darwin Falls

Length: 1 mile, one-way.

Difficulty: moderate

Start: One mile west of Panamint Springs Resort off Highway 190. Darwin Falls parking area, 2.4 miles up gravel road toward Darwin.

Description: Year-round waterfalls and lush vegetation tucked into a rugged canyon. Can be overgrown and has some rough spots. There is a trail to first waterfall but dangerous cliffs beyond.



Darwin Falls

Titus Canyon Narrows

Length: 1.5 miles, one-way.

Difficulty: easy

Start: Titus Canyon parking area, 3 miles off Scotty's Castle Road on graded gravel road.

Description: Easy access to lower Titus Canyon. Follow gravel road up wash 1.5 miles through narrows or continue to Klare Springs and petroglyphs at 6.5 miles.

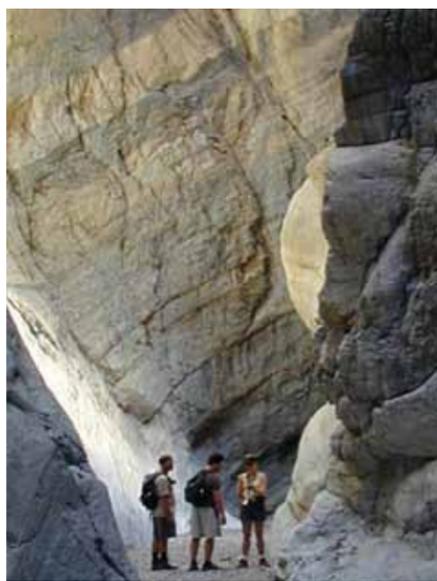
Fall Canyon

Length: 3 miles, one-way.

Difficulty: moderately strenuous

Start: Titus Canyon Mouth parking area, 3 miles off Scotty's Castle Road on graded gravel road.

Description: Spectacular wilderness canyon near Titus Canyon. Follow informal path ½ mile north along base of mountains, drop into large wash at canyon's mouth, then hike 2½ miles up canyon to 20 foot dryfall. You can climb around the dryfall 300 feet back down canyon on south side for access to best narrows. Canyon continues another 3 miles before second dryfall blocks passage. No trail in canyon.



Fall Canyon

Mosaic Canyon

Length: ½ mile, one-way.

Difficulty: moderate

Start: Mosaic Canyon Trailhead ¼ mile west of Stovepipe Wells.

Description: Polished marble walls and odd mosaic patterns of breccia make this small canyon a favorite. The twisting lower canyon is so narrow hikers must walk through it single-file. Some rock scrambling is required. The canyon opens up after ½ mile to reveal the heights of Tucki Mountain, but hikers can continue another 1½ miles.

Backroads

Be prepared before you drive into the backcountry! **Read the information on page 3** and discuss your plans with a ranger. Have a safe trip!

Eureka Dunes

Rising nearly 700 feet, these are the highest dunes in California. Isolated from other dunes, they are an evolutionary island, home to rare and endangered species of plants and animals. To give them extra protection, the dunes are off limits to sandboarding and horseback riding. The drive can be rough and will take approximately 2.5 hours from the end of pavement off of Scotty's Castle Road.



Eureka Dunes

The Racetrack

Rocks mysteriously slide across the dry lakebed of the Racetrack, leaving behind long tracks for visitors to ponder. A **high-clearance vehicle** is needed to traverse the 27 miles of rough dirt road; ask at a **ranger station for current road conditions**. Once you leave pavement at Ubehebe Crater the drive will take approximately 2.5 hours one-way to the racetrack.



The Racetrack

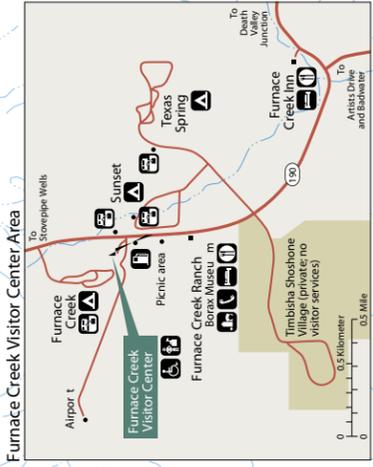
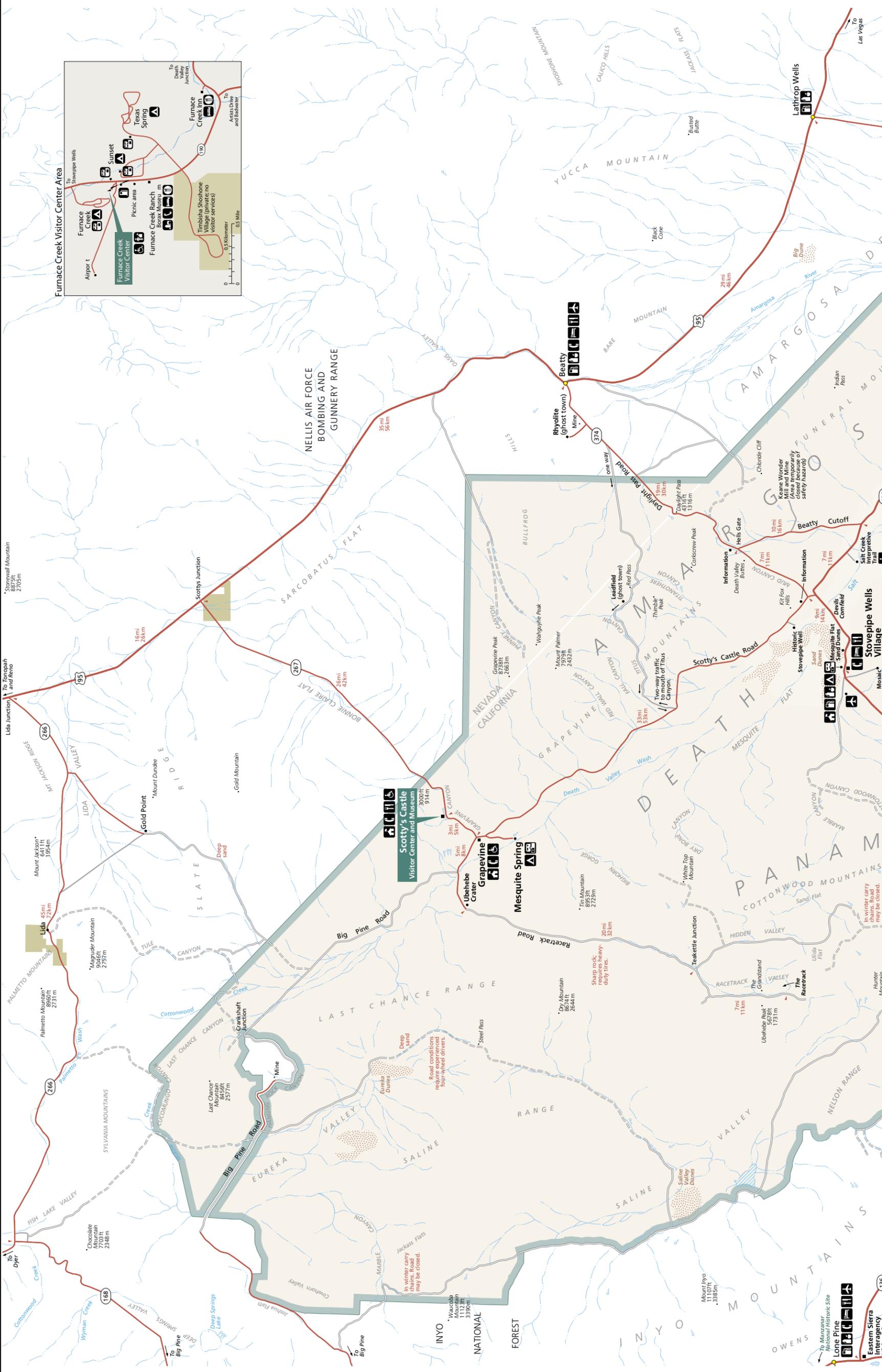
Aguereberry Point

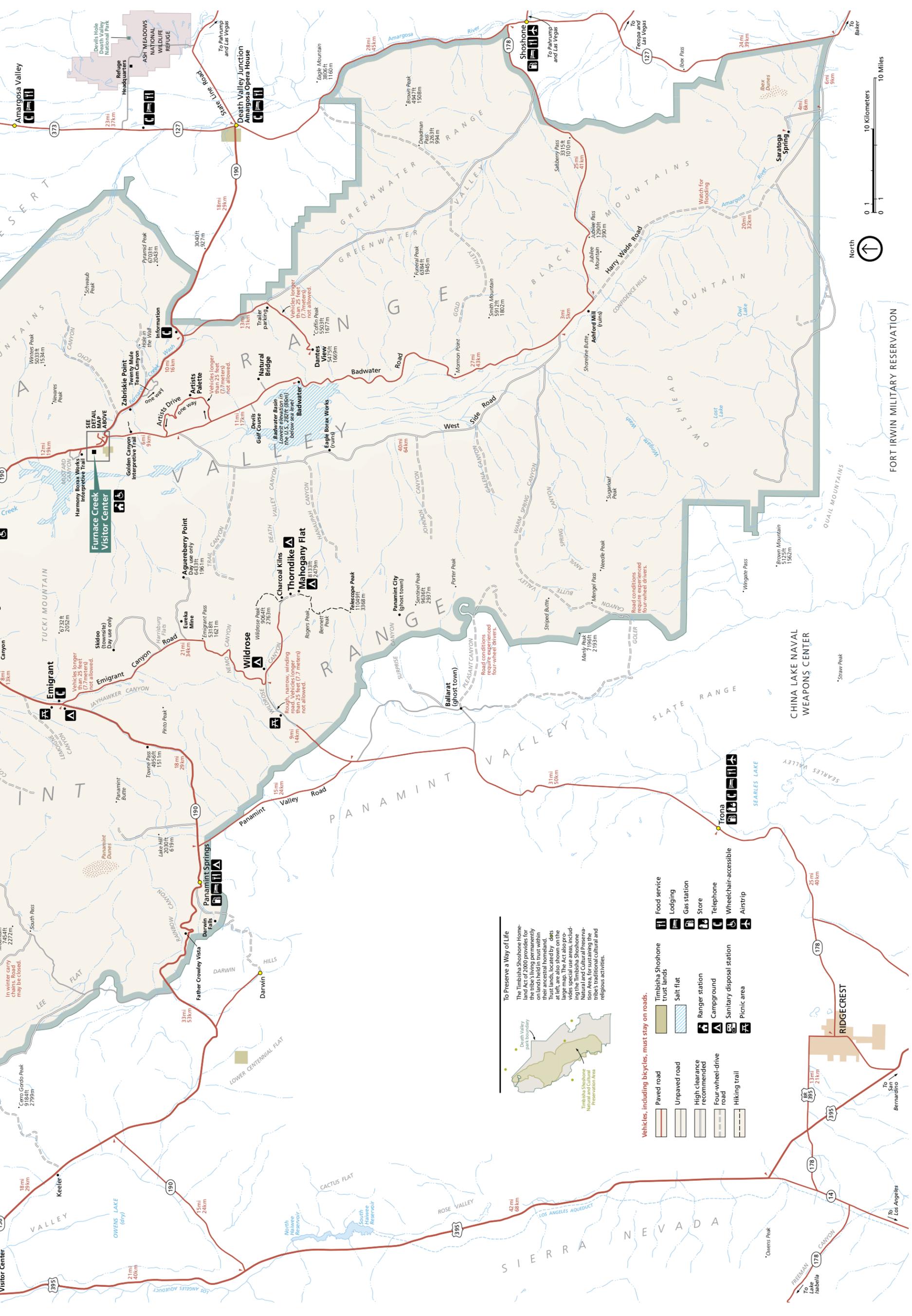
One thousand feet higher than Dante's View, this viewpoint gives a perspective over Death Valley from the west. Along the gravel road are the remains of Pete Aguerberry's camp and his Eureka Mine. The last climb to the point may require a **high-clearance vehicle**. The trip from Stovepipe Wells will take about 1.5 hours to the point.

Titus Canyon

The largest and most diverse canyon in the park. Within its lofty walls visitors can find volcanic deposits, a ghost town, Indian petroglyphs, bighorn sheep, and deep, winding narrows. Titus Canyon is accessible to **high-clearance vehicles** via a 26 mile, one-way dirt road beginning outside the park. The trip will take 3 hours from Beatty to Scotty's Castle Road.

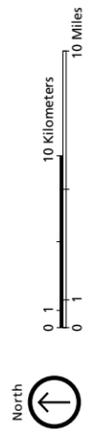
Death Valley National Park





To Preserve a Way of Life
 The Timbisha Shoshone Homeland Act of 2000 provides for the tribe's living permanently on lands held in trust within the park. The map shows the trust lands, located by dots at left, are also shown on the large map. The Act also provides special use areas, including National and Cultural Preservation Area, for sustaining the tribe's traditional cultural and religious activities.

- Vehicles, including bicycles, must stay on roads.**
- Paved road
 - Unpaved road
 - High clearance recommended
 - Four-wheel-drive road
 - Hiking trail
 - Timbisha Shoshone trust lands
 - Salt flat
 - Ranger station
 - Campground
 - Sanitary disposal station
 - Picnic area
 - Food service
 - Lodging
 - Gas station
 - Store
 - Telephone
 - Wheelchair-accessible
 - Airstrip



FORT IRWIN MILITARY RESERVATION

CHINA LAKE NAVAL WEAPONS CENTER

RIDGECREST

In winter carry chains Road may be closed.

Cerro Grado Peak 9184ft 2799m

Keeler

Visitor Center

Los Angeles Aqueduct

South Pass

Panamint Dunes

Panamint Butte

Emigrant Canyon

Emigrant

Agua Fria

Agua Fria

Furnace Creek

Park Projects

Furnace Creek "Historic Mission 66" Visitor Center



View of the restored Furnace Creek Visitor Center

The Furnace Creek Visitor Center complex in Death Valley National Park consists of two buildings and a central courtyard that were built in 1959 as part of the Mission 66 program to prepare the nation's parks for the 50 year anniversary of the National Park Service in 1966. A collaborative effort between the State of California, the not-for-profit Death Valley '49ers, and the National Park Service made construction of this complex possible. With age and the rising cost of energy over the last 50 years, the visitor center complex became Death Valley's most costly buildings to operate. The electricity alone was \$45,000 annually. In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allowed the park to begin designing the rehabilitation of this facility, and Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act fee dollars paid for its reconstruction. Our goal was to make the structure more sustainable and energy efficient, while retaining the regionally significant, mid-century modern appearance of this Mission 66 structure.

Returning visitors will notice:

- A lobby expansion of 1,500 square feet
- Modification of the theater where we will show a new park film
- A redesigned parking lot to improve traffic flow and provide shade
- New restroom facilities
- Shade structures in the courtyard

Energy saving changes include:

- Triple-pane insulated windows
- A new roof with increased insulation
- Air-lock entries to limit the cooling loss
- A modern, more efficient heating and cooling system
- Insulation between the old brick and a new inner wall
- A water station for visitors to fill their own water bottles



Furnace Creek Visitor Center courtyard

Is It LEED Gold?



The visitor center complex was designed to meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold standard for an existing building. LEED is an internationally-recognized "green" building certification system and provides building owners and operators with a framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable "green" building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions.

LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building was adapted using strategies aimed at achieving high performance in five key areas of human and environmental health:

- Sustainable site development
- Water savings
- Energy efficiency
- Materials selection
- Indoor environmental quality

Death Valley National Park decided to participate in the LEED process because we are committed to utilizing the taxpayers' money in the most efficient and sustainable way.

LEED documentation follows a stringent process to document everything that goes into the project.

The project examination process will be completed in 2013, at which time the park will be awarded a LEED certification.

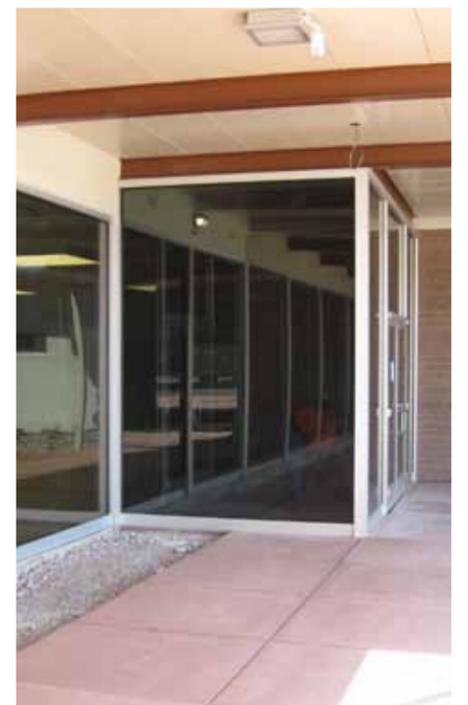
Reducing the Carbon Footprint of Death Valley

As you drive through Death Valley National Park you may see a number of photo-voltaic or solar panel systems and you may wonder...how much is that saving the park? Though the solar panels are installed, they have not been put into service yet. The National Park Service and Southern California Edison are hammering out legal documents for a net metering agreement between our agencies. When the agreements are finally signed the park expects to see 258.4 kilowatts or \$71,000 in savings. The following facilities are awaiting final agreements:

- Furnace Creek Visitor Center
- Cow Creek Administrative Complex
- Employee Dormitories
- Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station
- Stovepipe Wells Water System



Furnace Creek Visitor Center solar panel system



New energy saving air-lock entry to the Furnace Creek Visitor Center

Ranger Programs



Exploring with a Park Ranger

Death Valley National Park is vast and diverse; it takes years to truly understand and explore it. Attending a ranger program takes only a few minutes to a few hours and makes understanding Death Valley fun and easy. Park Rangers can introduce you to a new canyon or reintroduce you to a familiar site with a new twist. Programs include guided tours of historic sites, discussions on the visitor center patio, walks on the salt flats and dark night sky programs. Pick up a weekly ranger program schedule at any visitor center or find it online at www.nps.gov/deva to see the programs offered during your visit. Fees are charged for Scotty's Castle and Lower Vine tours; all other tours are free. Join us, and discover what this place is really all about!

Death Valley Night Sky Program



Night sky panoramic photo taken at the Racetrack

Have you ever wondered what that cluster of stars in the western sky is? Or that bright spot just over the horizon at sunset? Are you interested in seeing a lunar eclipse of Jupiter? With several high powered telescopes, Death Valley National Park rangers are opening up the mystery of the dark night skies.

Death Valley has one of the darkest night skies in the nation. Periodically night sky ranger star programs are offered in various areas of the park. In the past, the park has partnered with other organizations to bring telescopes of all shapes and sizes. From looking through a binoscope to seeing the colors of a nebula on a computer, there is something for everyone. You don't have to be an aspiring Galileo to enjoy the wonder of the night sky! Come join us!

Do You Want to Be a Scientist?



Desert tortoise

Around the world visitors to remote locations are providing valuable data to researchers by their observations. Your personal observations of wildlife can be very valuable. Death Valley National Park is currently designing a database that will hold visitor data and allow us to develop distribution maps of wildlife throughout the park. Two species of special interest are the Nelson's bighorn sheep and the desert tortoise.

Bighorn sheep spend much of their time in rugged and inaccessible locations. It can be challenging and expensive to collect population data.

The desert tortoise population has severely declined across the Mojave Desert in the past few decades. Surveying for a cryptic, low-density species can mean hours/days of searching with limited results. Tortoises in Death Valley are generally active during mild weather retreating into their burrows to escape extreme heat or cold.

The Desert Managers Group has developed a free app for Smartphones so you can provide information on tortoise sightings to the National Park Service staff. Go to www.dmg.gov/announcements.php?id=120 for more information.



Other wildlife species observations are welcome also. Please be as accurate as possible and include your contact information. Photos provide great information and are always appreciated. Thank you for participating as a visitor scientist!

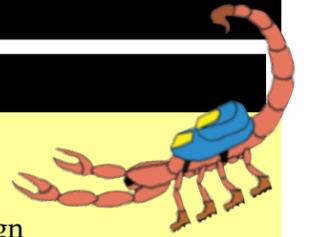
Please fill out a wildlife sighting form available at any visitor center.



Nelson's bighorn sheep herd

You Can Be a *Junior Ranger!*

Want to have fun while exploring Death Valley? Pick up your *free* junior ranger book at any visitor center. After you finish the activities and recite the junior ranger pledge, a park ranger will sign your book and give you an official junior ranger badge.



Present your completed junior ranger book at any Death Valley Natural History Association bookstore and you can purchase a special junior ranger patch for a small fee. What a great way to explore Death Valley!

Death Valley - An Oasis for Education

Imagine a classroom 3.4 million acres in size, full of plants, animals, water, weather, rocks, historic buildings and starry night skies. Death Valley National Park provides just such a learning venue to hundreds of students, teachers, and chaperones every year through the many education programs offered by our staff.

If you are a teacher interested in planning a field trip to Death Valley, arranging for a ranger to visit your classroom, or having our traveling trunk shipped to you, visit our website www.nps.gov/deva/forteachers or contact our Education Specialist at 760-786-3226.

These opportunities are made possible through grants and generous private donations. If you want to support the future of our National Parks by supporting these education programs, contact Death Valley Natural History Association at dvnha.org/death-valley-rocks.html or call 760-786-2146.

Death Valley ROCKS

ROCKS (the Recreational Outdoor Campaign for Kids through Study) is a three-day, two-night environmental education camp program. Students engage in hands-on, outdoor, inquiry-based learning activities that enhance science, language art, visual art, history, mathematics, and physical education skills by exploring the essential question, "How does geology influence human, plant, and animal life?" Students also learn camping and desert survival skills. The curriculum-based program is designed for California 5th grade students and Nevada 7th grade students, but can be adapted for older or younger audiences. Las Vegas and Los Angeles public schools with under-served populations, and local rural schools are invited to apply for full or partial transportation scholarships.



Customized Education Programs

The Death Valley education staff is happy to provide short, on-topic programs for visiting classes, whether you are a local school coming out for a day trip, or a distant group planning your own itinerary but interested in a little bit of ranger support. Scout troops and other community organizations are welcome to request these programs. See our website at www.nps.gov/deva/forteachers/ranger-guided-day-and-night-programs.htm for a complete list of topics, times, and grade levels.

Desert Invaders



malcolmia
(*Malcolmia africana*)



Saharan mustard
(*Brassica tournefortii*)

To preserve the desert landscape in Death Valley National Park, we must actively manage non-native species and quickly identify new invaders. In Death Valley we currently enjoy a wild landscape that is largely unimpaired but we need your help to keep it that way.

A Smart phone application is now available for free from whatsinvasive.com to help you report non-native species to National Park Service staff. Don't worry if you don't have cell reception, your report will be uploaded as soon as you are within service. In the springtime, during wildflower season, Death Valley is on high alert for Saharan mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*) and malcolmia (*Malcolmia africana*). You don't need an app to report sightings of these plants. Just let someone at the visitor center know. Photos and maps are helpful!



Another way to help preserve the desert landscape is to ensure there are no unwanted hitchhikers on your car or your clothes. Before you enter a park, check underneath your vehicle and inside the grill for weeds that might have tumbled into your car. Also check your clothes and shoelaces for seeds before setting out for a hike. If you do find seeds, seal them in a plastic bag and throw them away.

Scotty's Castle

A History of Adventure, Eccentricity, and Legendary Cunning...

Walter "Death Valley Scotty" Scott could be seen as either an entertainer or conman—or both. Scotty left his family's Kentucky home at a very young age to work as a cowboy in the American West. As a teenager he worked numerous jobs out west, including in Death Valley.

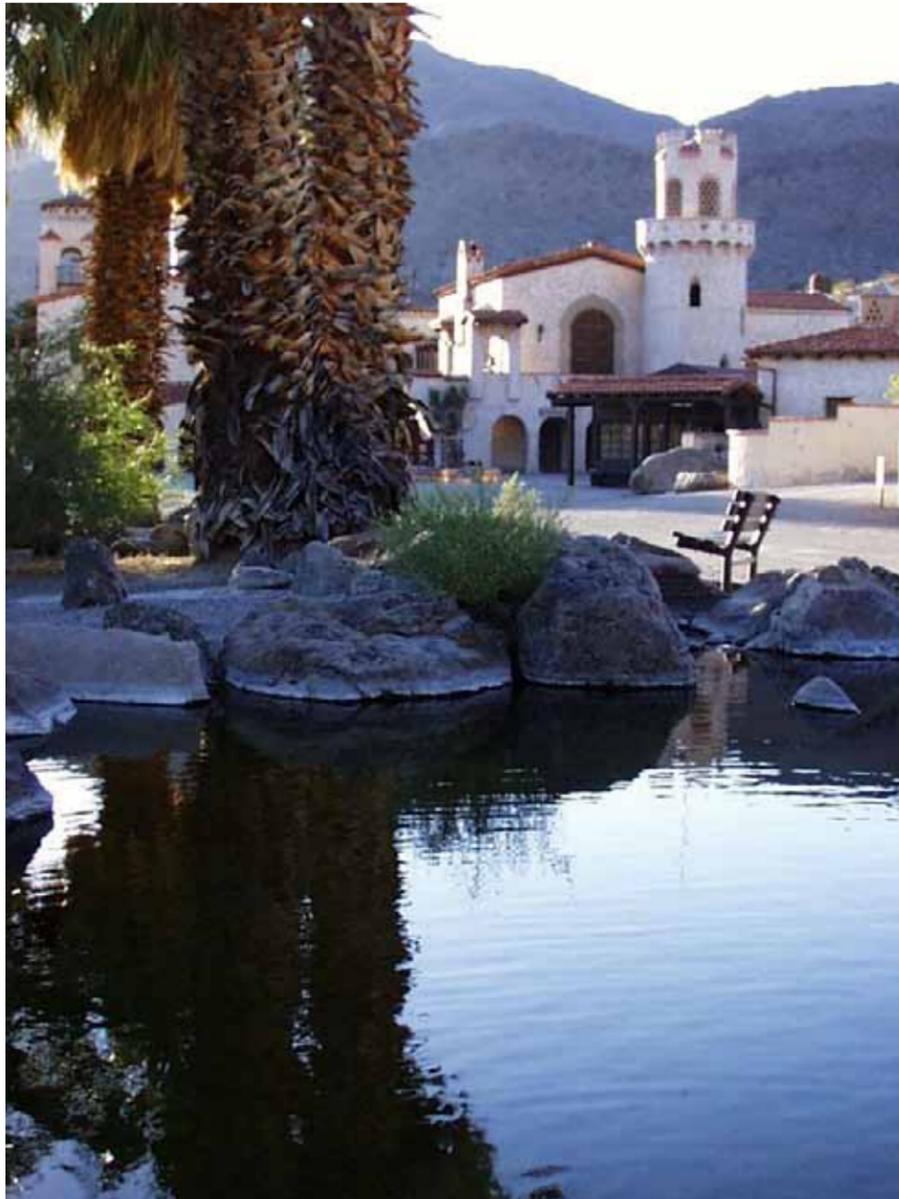
A talent scout for William "Buffalo Bill" Cody discovered Scotty in 1890 and hired him to work as a stunt performer in Buffalo Bill's world famous Wild West show. It was as an actor with the Wild West show that Scotty learned showmanship skills that would later serve him in his next career.

In 1902, Scotty began a new profession that would bring him even more fame and riches: talking people out of their money. Scotty convinced several wealthy businessmen that he had a fabulous gold mine claim in Death Valley and agreed to split the profits, provided they first forward investment money to Scotty. One of these investors was Albert Johnson, an insurance executive from Chicago, Illinois.

Hoping to gain full control of Scotty's mining interests, Johnson traveled to Death Valley in 1906 to see Scotty's fabled mine. Of course, Scotty never showed Johnson the gold mine. Instead he took Johnson on an adventure grander than anything the wealthy businessman probably ever expected. They camped in the desert, and were even involved in a gunfight!

Johnson began to make regular trips to Death Valley with Scotty. By 1915, Albert and his wife, Bessie, began acquiring land within Grapevine Canyon, in the northern part of Death Valley. The surprising Spanish-style castle-in-the-desert served as the Johnsons' vacation home.

However, Scotty was quick to pretend ownership, and it became known as Scotty's Castle. Soon the Johnsons and Scotty were enjoying a good laugh at the expense of Death Valley's early tourists, some of whom actually believed Scotty's legendary gold mine was located in the tunnels beneath the Castle.



Bessie's pool, an oasis in the desert



Death Valley Scotty & Albert Johnson share a joke

Touring the Castle

House Tour



Best tour for first-time visitors. Tours are led by National Park Service Rangers, dressed in 1939 clothing. The guide will share stories about the heyday of the Castle in the late '30s, the construction in the 1920s, and the curious relationship between the Johnsons and Scotty. The house is fully furnished with the Johnsons' original decorations. Some of their clothing even hangs in the closets! A highlight of the program is listening to the Welte Mignon theater organ. Tours offered daily, times vary. One hour. Wheelchair lift may be available.

Underground Tour



Scotty's Castle was very remote when it was built in the 1920s. The underground tour focuses on how the Johnsons built a comfortable vacation home in Death Valley. The tour sees the basement, underground tunnels, heating system, original pipes, original power generation and power storage systems. A highlight is the demonstration of electrical generation using an original Pelton water wheel. Offered most days from November through April, times vary. One hour. Tour involves stairs, no lift available.

Lower Vine Hiking Tour



Scotty's Castle was not Scotty's home. Albert and Bessie Johnson had the structures at Lower Vine Ranch built partly as a residence for Scotty and partly to lock up water rights near the Castle. Scotty's modest cabin, garage, small blacksmith shed, grain shed, and corrals are seen on this 2-mile, 2½ hour round trip ranger-guided hike over uneven surfaces. Offered occasionally. Reservations strongly recommended.

Tickets

These prices are effective through December 31, 2011

House Tour or Underground Tour:

Adult	\$11
Youth (ages 6-15)	\$6
Children 5 and younger	Free
Access pass holders	\$6
(U.S. citizens with disability)	
Seniors (U.S. citizens 62+)	\$9

Lower Vine Hiking Tour:

Adult	\$15
Youth (ages 6-15)	\$8
Children 5 and younger	Free
Access pass holders	\$8
(U.S. citizens with disability)	
Seniors (U.S. citizens 62+)	\$11

- Combination discount offered to people that go on House and Underground tours in same day.
- Reservations are not necessary for House and Underground Tours, but can reduce wait time once you arrive. Reservations are strongly recommended for Lower Vine Hiking Tours.

Tickets may be purchased at least one day in advance from www.recreation.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777. On the day of the tour, tickets may only be purchased in person at the Scotty's Castle Visitor Center.

- Visitors are encouraged to enjoy the picnic area and to walk outside the buildings freely during business hours. Pre-packaged sandwiches, soft drinks, snacks, books and souvenirs are available. No gasoline or lodging.

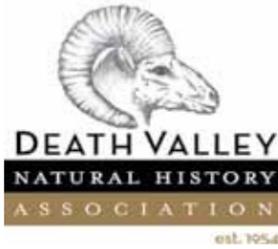
Park Partners

Death Valley Natural History Association

Since 1954 the Death Valley Natural History Association (DVNHA) has been assisting Death Valley National Park as a cooperating association. DVNHA is a non-profit association dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the natural and cultural history of the Death Valley region. To date, the DVNHA has contributed more than \$3 million to the park!

DVNHA operates bookstores in four locations:

- Furnace Creek Visitor Center
- Stovepipe Wells Ranger Station
- Scotty's Castle Visitor Center
- Ash Meadows Wildlife Refuge Office



DVNHA contributes 100% of its profit to benefit education and research in Death Valley National Park and Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. Some of the projects DVNHA supports include the Death Valley ROCKS education program, Youth Conservation Corps program, summer internships program, and printing of the park's *Visitor Guide* each year.

DVNHA also sponsors the Death Valley Conference on History and Prehistory -- scheduled for November 4-6, 2011 in Beatty, Nevada. Twenty-four presenters are on the schedule to impart new research on the region across a range of topics. If you have never attended this event which takes place every two years, put it on your calendar. You will not be disappointed!

DVNHA is a member-supported organization. Membership not only increases support to the park, but also increases visitor awareness and education—something you can feel good about now and in the future. In addition to supporting projects that might not otherwise be funded, benefits of membership include:

- 15% discount on all purchases at four locations.
- 15% discount at most National Park Service Visitor Center bookstores nationwide.
- Subscription to *Telescope*, our membership newsletter.
- Advance notice of special events and sales.
- A free membership patch.

For more information, see dvnha.org

Death Valley Conservancy

The Death Valley Conservancy (DVC), a California non-profit public benefit corporation, was established in 2008 to provide support and develop broad-based private funding for significant projects in Death Valley National Park and the surrounding communities.

Its special "Death Valley Fund" was created to provide for Park-specific projects that preserve, protect or enhance Death Valley National Park's natural, cultural and historic resources and the visitor experience.

The DVC has already raised and provided considerable support. Noteworthy is a \$100,000 grant from the Offield Family Foundation for research for the endangered Devil's Hole Pupfish. This grant purchased custom, specialized, state-of-the-art stereo video equipment and software and is funding a researcher from Ball State University to focus on Devils Hole's unique habitat along with the needed scientific equipment.

The DVC also secured a donation of \$10,000 and 900 sleeping bags for students in the Death Valley ROCKS program through the Coleman Company.

The DVC is in the process of acquiring the historic Ryan mining camp from Rio Tinto Corporation (previously US Borax) along with providing significant funds to pay for restoration and future maintenance. There are plans to restore the camp as much as possible to its historic flavor, and DVC is currently exploring the use of Ryan mining camp as an educational and research center in the future.

You can read more about DVC at dvconservancy.org/



Historic Ryan Camp

Timbisha Shoshone Tribe



Tribe members Pauline Esteves and Barbara Durham while "spring cleaning"

native domesticated plants. Tribal knowledge also included the location of water sources which they regularly cleaned and kept clear of debris to ensure a continued supply of clean, potable water. Some springs are choked with vegetation because the Tribe has not been allowed to continue its traditional care-taking activities.

Today, working in concert with the staff at Death Valley National Park, members of the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe are involved in the co-management of some of the spring sites by using traditional methods. Using hand tools the pruning and clearing out the overgrowth of vegetation at the springs will provide access to surface water, enhance water flow, and will maintain and enhance the growth of desirable grasses and other herbaceous species.

VIPs Sighted at Death Valley National Park

Everyone knows what a VIP is, but we have our own meaning for them here in Death Valley—Volunteers in Parks. These folks are truly VIPs in every sense of the word. Our VIPs work in every park division doing all kinds of work, from interpretive programs to the auto shop.



Volunteer Mike Wehmeyer drives & repairs the fire engine, is an EMT and leads tours at Scotty's Castle

Volunteers are an integral part of nearly every park within the National Park system. In Death Valley National Park, volunteers contributed more than 36,000 labor-hours in 2011, the equivalent of more than 17 person-years of work!

Volunteers come to the park for all different types of work and for various lengths of time. Some, like campground hosts, are here all winter long, while others for shorter stays. Most live in their RVs near the employee housing area. We also have "virtual volunteers;" those that work at home and only come to the park on a periodic basis.

In addition to those coming from afar, we have volunteers from our local gateway communities that contribute their expertise to our operations. This is a great opportunity for the park and our neighbors to make a connection. College and universities come in small groups to tackle wilderness restoration projects or help with debris clean up. We nearly always have Americorps or Student Conservation Association volunteers in the park at any given time. Scouts and conservation groups like to lend a hand for a weekend or a day. We can welcome most groups if we have adequate advance notice.

We're often looking for a particular skill set, and recruit for specific positions at volunteer.gov/gov. The nps.gov site also provides a searchable database where you can search by park or by state.

For more info on Death Valley's volunteer program, call Cheryl Chipman at 760-786-3207.



Volunteers Jim & Gladyce Neves have been hosts at Texas Springs Campground for thirteen years.



Volunteer Jim "Chickenwire" Klassen keeps Park radios in good repair.

Visitor Services in Death Valley

Name	Telephone	Services
Furnace Creek Visitor Center (www.nps.gov/deva)	760-786-3200	The Furnace Creek Visitor Center is operated by the National Park Service. Park rangers provide information, ranger talks, and park information. Pay park entrance fees and purchase passes.
Death Valley Natural History Association (dvnha.org/)	800-478-8564	The Death Valley Natural History Association operates the bookstores inside of the visitor centers at Furnace Creek and Scotty's Castle as well as the Stovepipe Wells ranger station and Ash Meadows.
Scotty's Castle (www.nps.gov/deva/historyculture/scottys-castle.htm)	760-786-2392	Scotty's Castle is operated by the National Park Service. Park rangers provide daily tours (fee charged), visitor information and assistance. Soft drinks, sandwiches and snacks are also available.
www.recreation.gov (www.recreation.gov)	877-444-6777	Recreation.gov provides reservations at some government campgrounds within Death Valley between October 15 to April 15. Furnace Creek campground reservations can be made up to six months in advance. Group campsite reservations can be made eleven months in advance. Scotty's Castle tour reservations can be made up to 24 hours prior to the visit.
Stovepipe Wells Village (escapetodeathvalley.com)	760-786-2387	Stovepipe Wells Village is a park concession operated and managed by the Death Valley Lodge Company. The company provides the following services: motel, restaurant, bar, ATM, gift shop, convenience store, gas station, showers, swimming pool, paved airstrip, RV hookups, campground, and ranger station
Panamint Springs Resort (www.deathvalley.com/psr)	775-482-7680	Panamint Springs Resort is privately owned and operated. The resort provides the following services: Motel, restaurant, bar, gas station, campground, RV hookups, showers.
Furnace Creek Inn & Ranch Resorts (www.furnacecreekresort.com)	760-786-2345	Furnace Creek Inn and Ranch are private inholdings within the National Park. Managed by Xanterra Parks and Resorts, the Inn and Ranch have the following services available: historic hotel, motel, camping, restaurants, bars, general store, gift shops, ATM, gas station, diesel, propane, tire repair, post office, showers, laundromat, swimming, bike rentals, horse rides, carriage rides, borax museum, golf course, tennis courts, paved airstrip, jeep rentals and tours.
Farabee's Jeep Rentals & Towing (www.DeathValleyJeepRentals.com)	877-970-5337	Farabee's is located across from the Inn at Furnace Creek and offers jeep rentals, including trail maps, driving tips and ice chests. Also provide towing services.

CAMPGROUND	Open Season	Elevation	Fee	Number of Sites	Water	Tables	Firepits	Toilets	RV Hookups	Dump Station
Furnace Creek (NPS)	all year	-196'	\$18**	136	yes	yes	yes	flush	no	yes
Sunset (NPS)	mid-Oct to mid-Apr	-196'	\$12	270	yes	no	no	flush	no	yes
Texas Spring (NPS)	mid-Oct to mid-Apr	sea level	\$14	106	yes	yes	yes	flush	no	yes
Stovepipe Wells (NPS)	mid-Oct to mid-Apr	sea level	\$12	190	yes	some	some	flush	no	yes
Stovepipe Wells Resort (RV only)	all year	sea level	\$31	14	yes	some	no	flush	50 amp	yes
Furnace Creek Ranch (RV only)	all year	-218'	\$32	12	yes	no	no	flush	yes	yes
Mesquite Spring (NPS - 30')	all year	1,800'	\$12	40	yes	yes	yes	flush	no	yes
Panamint Springs Resort	all year	2,000'	\$7.50-\$30	50	yes	yes	some	flush	yes	yes
Emigrant (NPS - tent only)	all year	2100'	free	10	yes	yes	no	flush	no	no
Wildrose (NPS - 25')	all year	4100'	free	23	yes	yes	yes	pit	no	no
Thorndike* (NPS)	Mar-Nov	7400'	free	6	no	yes	yes	pit	no	no
Mahogany Flat* (NPS)	Mar-Nov	8200'	free	10	no	yes	yes	pit	no	no

* Accessible to high clearance vehicles only. 4-wheel drive may be necessary.

** Furnace Creek Campground fee changes to \$12 per night from mid-April to mid-October.

Temperatures

	Max	Min
Jan.	65°F / 18°C	39°F / 4°C
Feb.	72°F / 22°C	46°F / 8°C
March	80°F / 27°C	53°F / 12°C
April	90°F / 32°C	62°F / 17°C
May	99°F / 37°C	71°F / 22°C
June	109°F / 43°C	80°F / 27°C
July	115°F / 46°C	88°F / 31°C
August	113°F / 45°C	85°F / 29°C
Sept.	106°F / 41°C	75°F / 24°C
Oct.	92°F / 33°C	62°F / 16°C
Nov.	76°F / 24°C	48°F / 9°C
Dec.	65°F / 19°C	39°F / 4°C

Official weather station at Furnace Creek
Record High: 134°F / 57°C July 1913
Record Low: 15°F / -9°C January 1913

New Concessionaire

Death Valley National Park is pleased to welcome a new concessionaire at Stovepipe Wells Village. The Death Valley Lodging Company, run by the Ortega Family Enterprises, was selected to run the operation in January 2011 for a term of 10 years.

"We will be leading the charge to operate as responsible partners in all phases of business operations. Our environmentally conscious efforts are priority one with any project and our goal is to be the template for the future of National Park concession operations." says Shane Ortega, who holds an MBA from Stanford with an emphasis on environmental stewardship.

The Ortega family is from Sante Fe, New Mexico, and well known as successful entrepreneurs throughout the Southwest. They operate other National Park concessions at Bandelier, White Sands, Carlsbad Caverns, and Muir Woods, and they manage the historic El Rancho Hotel in Gallup, New Mexico. They also manage galleries in the southwest featuring Native American jewelry.

The Death Valley Lodging Company has updated several aspects of the property, including complimentary Wi-Fi in all rooms and they have revised the menu with year-round lunches served in the Saloon.

