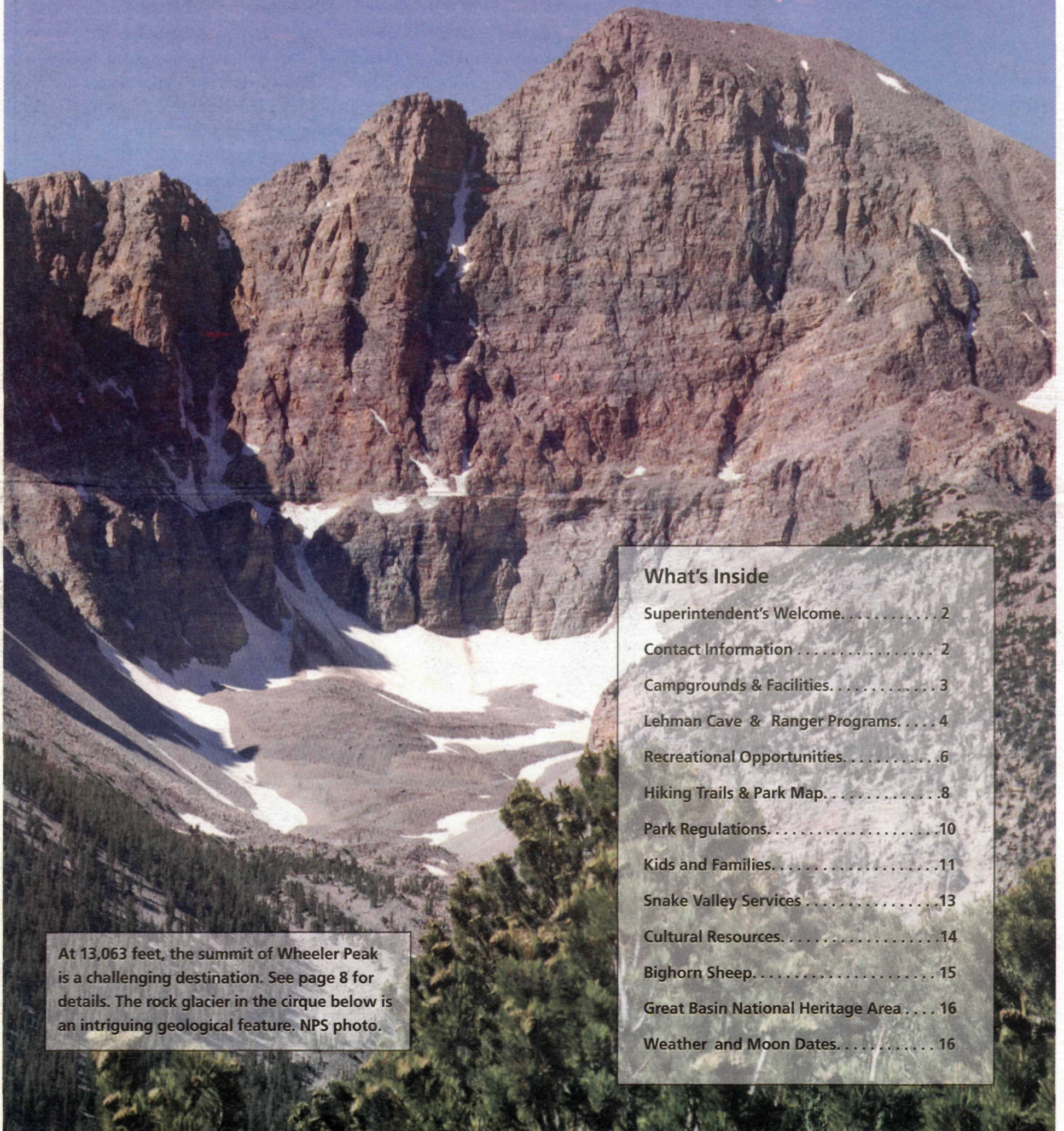


# The Bristlecone

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



The official newspaper of Great Basin National Park  
Summer 2010 - Spring 2011



At 13,063 feet, the summit of Wheeler Peak is a challenging destination. See page 8 for details. The rock glacier in the cirque below is an intriguing geological feature. NPS photo.

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# Park Facilities

## Lehman Caves Visitor Center

The Lehman Caves Visitor Center is located at the end of the main park entrance road (Hwy 488). The visitor center and Lehman Cave are open every day of the year except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. The self-guided Mountain View Nature Trail begins at the visitor center. Restrooms, drinking water, and a pay phone are also available. Adjacent to the visitor center, Lehman Caves Gift and Café is open in the summer 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

## Great Basin Visitor Center

The Great Basin Visitor Center, located just north of the town of Baker opened in May 2005 and provides information on the park and the Great Basin region. Exhibits funded through donations raised by the Great Basin National Park Foundation tell the geological, biological, and cultural stories of the Great Basin. Open in summer 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

## Accessibility

Both visitor centers are accessible. The Lehman Caves Visitor Center provides a lift between the parking lot and main level. The Great Basin National Park slide show is subtitled.

All four developed campgrounds have at least one accessible site. Each campsite has a picnic table, fire grate, and tent pad. These sites are generally located next to accessible restrooms. All sites are first-come, first-served. When campgrounds fill, these sites are made available to all campers.

Evening programs are offered during the summer at the Upper Lehman Creek and Wheeler Peak Campgrounds. Both are accessible and are a wonderful way to wrap up a day in Great Basin National Park.

Assisted listening devices are available for use with any ranger-led program, including cave walks and evening programs. Talk to a ranger at any visitor center about using one before the start of the program.

To access the telephone relay services, TTY users should call (800) 326-6868. The user will be connected to an interpreter and automated system. The voice number in Nevada to reach an interpreter is 1-800-326-6888.

## Picnic Areas

The park has several developed picnic areas. The first is located near the Lehman Caves Visitor Center parking lot. It has several accessible tables and fire grills. Restrooms and water are available in the summer. Upper Lehman Creek Campground has several picnicking possibilities, including an area near the host site and tables near the amphitheater that are available for groups through a special use permit (775-234-7331, ext. 213). The newest park picnic area and restroom facilities are located at the Pole Canyon trailhead.

## WNPA Bookstores

Western National Parks Association operates two bookstores in the park, one at each visitor center. Both stores offer a wide range of titles on the natural and cultural resources of the region.

## Strawberry Creek Delays and Closures

This summer, major improvements will be made to the road and campsites in Strawberry Creek. To expedite work during the short construction season and to ensure the safety of our staff and visitors, there will be delays and closures throughout the summer.

Expect construction delays and/or closures Mondays through Thursdays. Park staff will be opening and closing areas as construction progresses.

Limited primitive camping will be available Friday and Saturday nights. Strawberry Creek will be closed for camping Sunday through Thursday nights.

For the most up-to-date information, ask a ranger at a visitor center.

## Campgrounds

Great Basin National Park has four developed campgrounds with vault toilets, picnic tables, tent pads, and campfire grills. There are no hookups or leveled parking sites. Water is available in the summer at the campgrounds, or year-round at the visitor centers. Campsites are first-come, first-served. No reservations can be made. Visitors are responsible for knowing and following all campground regulations, which are posted on the campground bulletin boards. Camping fees are \$12 per night per site (\$6 with a Senior or Access Pass), with a 50% reduction when the water systems are turned off (spring and fall).

**Lower Lehman Creek Campground** is open year-round, is located along the Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive at an elevation of 7,300 feet and has 11 sites including 6 pull-throughs.

**Upper Lehman Creek Campground** is generally open May through October, is located along the Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive at an elevation of 7,752 feet and has 22 sites.

**Baker Creek Campground** is located along the Baker Creek Road at an elevation of 7,530 feet and has 34 sites, 6 of which are pull-throughs. It is generally open May through October.

**Wheeler Peak Campground** is located at the end of the Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive at an elevation of 9,886 feet and has 37 sites. It is generally open Late May/early June through September.

**Grey Cliffs Group Campground** is available (groups only) by reservation from Memorial Day to Labor Day. It has pit toilets and picnic tables but no potable water. Fees apply. Reservations required: (775) 234-7331, ext. 213.

Free primitive camping facilities are available along Strawberry and Snake Creek roads. All sites have fire grates. Snake Creek sites have picnic tables; some also have pit toilets. Group size is limited to 15 people, 6 pack animals, and 6 vehicles per site. Maximum stay is 14 days per site.

## RV Dump Station

The RV dump station, potable water, and trash receptacles are located approximately one half mile inside the park on the entrance road (Hwy 488). Summer only; \$5.00 fee applies, no discounts.



# Lehman Cave

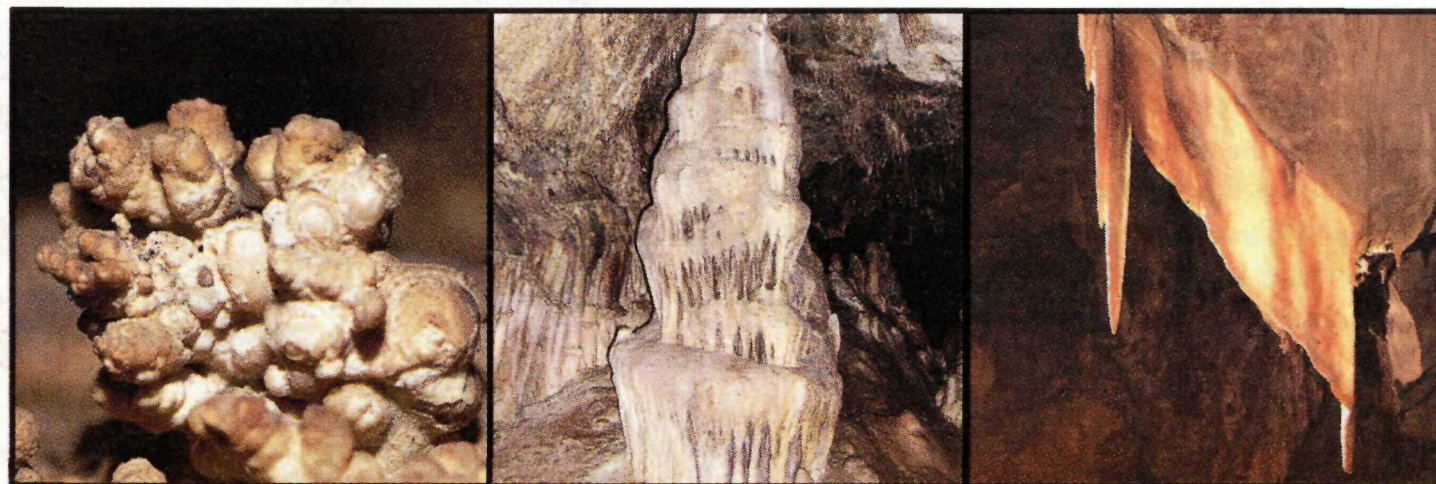
## Tour Prices

### Grand Palace Tour

Adults (16+)	\$10.00
Youth (5-15)	\$5.00
Infants/Tots (0-4)	N/A
Senior Pass	\$5.00
Access Pass	50%

### Lodge Room Tour

Adults (16+)	\$8.00
Youth (5-15)	\$4.00
Infants/Tots (0-4)	FREE
Senior Pass	\$4.00
Access Pass	50%



Cave popcorn (left), stalagmites (center) and translucent cave bacon (right) are just a few of the formations found in Lehman Cave. Explore this underground world on a guided walk with a Great Basin National Park ranger. NPS photos.

## Tour Information

Lehman Cave can only be entered with a guided tour. All tours are guided by a park ranger who will discuss the history, biology and geology of the cave.

The **Grand Palace Tour** visits all areas of the cave that are open to the public, takes about 90 minutes, is 0.54 miles total and is open to visitors ages 5 and older.

The **Lodge Room Tour** visits several rooms in the cave, takes about 60 minutes to complete, covers 0.4 miles and is open to all visitors.

A Gothic Palace Tour is an option for visitors who are unable to negotiate the stairs and narrow passageways. Regrettably, Lehman Cave is not ADA accessible. The entrance tunnel is 250 feet long with a 5-8% grade; wheelchairs are permitted only if members of your party can control and push the chair both into and out of the cave. Speak with a ranger for details.

Limited **photography** is permitted. Please follow your ranger's guidance on when and where to take photos and be aware that flashes can impair vision and disorient other visitors.

## A Fragile Environment

The Lehman Cave ecosystem is easily affected by our presence and actions. Please help us in our effort to maintain its integrity by following these important rules:

You may bring a jacket, a hand-held camera, and a flashlight into the cave. All other items, including food, water or other beverages, purses, backpacks, camera cases, and tripods are not allowed. Touching or collecting of cave formations is strictly prohibited.

## For Your Comfort and Safety

- The elevation of the cave entrance is 6,825' (2080 m).
- There are steps and slopes along the cave tour route.
- Low ceilings may require frequent stooping.
- Trails may be slippery. Wear shoes with good traction.
- Watch your step and use handrails where provided.
- Stay with your tour and stay on the trail.
- The cave is a constant 50° F (10° C) and 90% humidity.
- A light jacket is recommended.

## Ticket Sales

Lehman Cave tours are limited to 20 people per tour and do sell out. Tickets may be purchased up to one month in advance. Tickets cannot be purchased over the phone on the day of the tour.

Tickets may be purchased in person at the Lehman Caves Visitor Center or by phone at (775) 234-7331, ext. 242. All tickets must be paid for at the time of purchase. Major credit cards are accepted for phone orders. Phone orders are taken between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. All advance sales are final; please plan carefully.

Advance tickets must be picked up at the Lehman Caves Visitor Center at least 15 minutes prior to tour time. Unclaimed tickets will go on sale to walk-in customers and will not be refunded. Senior and Access Passes must be presented to be eligible for a discount.

## Purchase your Annual Pass at Great Basin National Park and get one FREE cave tour ticket!

The pass covers entrance fees at all National Park Service sites and other federal recreation sites for one year. Buy your \$80 pass at Great Basin National Park and you receive one free cave tour - up to a \$10.00 value!

## Tour Times

### Summer Schedule

(May 28 - Sept. 6, 2010)

#### Grand Palace Tour

9:00, 11:00, 1:00 and 3:00

#### Lodge Room Tour

8:30, 10:30, 12:30, 2:30  
and 4:00

### Winter Schedule

(Sept. 7, 2010 - May 26, 2011)

#### Grand Palace Tour

9:00 and 1:00

#### Lodge Room Tour

11:00 and 3:00

All times are Pacific Time



# Walks & Talks

## Ranger Programs

A variety of ranger-guided walks and talks may be available throughout the summer: join us to experience our remarkable resources first-hand! Evening campfire programs are offered in the summer at Upper Lehman Creek and Wheeler Peak Campgrounds. Programs are 45-60 minutes long and address subjects related to the Great Basin's human history, geology, plants, wildlife, and more. Fifteen-minute patio talks are presented at the visitor centers and cover a range of subjects as well. Great Basin for Kids is a wonderful option for families with young children. The program schedule changes throughout the summer, so stop by a visitor center for program times, topics and locations. Pets are not permitted at ranger programs. All outdoor programs are weather dependent.

## Self-guided Interpretive Trails

Great Basin National Park offers three self-guided interpretive trails. Experience a pinyon-juniper ecosystem along the **Mountain View Nature Trail**, located at the Lehman Caves Visitor Center. Walk an easy 1/4-mile and learn about the sub-alpine forest along the **Island Forest Trail**, located near Wheeler Peak Campground. Take some time to learn about the impressive survival strategies of the world's longest-living trees along the **Bristlecone Interpretive Trail**, located 1.4 miles up the bristlecone-glacier trail. See page 8 for trail information.



See trees ranging in age from just a few years to several thousand along the bristlecone interpretive trail.

## The Darkest Night Skies

Two-thirds of Americans cannot see the Milky Way from their backyards, and nearly all of us (99%) live in places with measurable light pollution. Here at Great Basin National Park, our night skies are dark — among the darkest in the country, even among other national parks. Join a ranger and amateur astronomers for a celebration of this rare and valuable resource. In this sanctuary of natural darkness you can see stars like few places on Earth! Special stargazing events are scheduled this summer for May 29 & 30, July 24 & 25, and September 4 & 5. The First Annual Astronomy Festival will be held August 6 - 8.

# Lehman Cave Restoration Continues

Work continues on the Lehman Cave Restoration Project. This project, funded through the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act, is restoring 4,700 square feet of cave floor in Lehman Cave to a natural condition by removing over 800 feet of trails and 1,500 feet of electrical lines from the cave. These areas of the cave were closed to public use in 1981 following safety concerns in the Talus Room section. The physical deterioration and decomposition of these abandoned features are impacting natural resources and water quality in the cave. As of April 2010, park staff and volunteers have removed approximately 450 feet of trail and 1200 feet of electrical line.

The concrete, asphalt, and sand making up the trail has been removed one 5-gallon bucket at a time and currently totals over 37 tons of debris. Work this spring and summer will be in the Sunken Gardens and West Room sections of the cave. Visitors should expect to



see and hear staff in these sections as they restore the cave to its former beauty. Staff have recently uncovered 3 new rimstone dams and pools in the Sunken Garden. These areas, once paved over, have been refilling with water during the wet season and may hold water year round.

**Have you ever  
wanted to work in  
a national park?**

**Great Basin National Park** can use your enthusiasm and expertise! Volunteers may be able to help the park in the following areas:

**Campgrounds**

**Natural & Cultural  
Resource Management**

**Interpretation  
& Education**

**The Park Library  
& Museum**

Housing may be available, depending on length and season of service.

Thank you to all the 2008 Volunteers who donated over 6,500 hours to help with campgrounds, trails, visitor services, and resource management projects!



**If you would like to help  
YOUR NATIONAL PARK  
by volunteering, call:  
(775) 234-7331, ext. 213.**



## Great Basin Artist-in-Residence

Throughout our nation's history, artists and writers have brought attention to our national heritage and have played a large part in the establishment of many national parks. Today many artists are able to visit our national park areas and become part of the many Artist in Residence programs offered by our national parks.

Great Basin National Park follows the tradition, offering the Darwin Lambert Artist/Writer-in-Residence Program. This program was created in honor of the late Darwin Lambert. As a proponent for the creation of Great Basin National Park and other parks, Lambert authored Great Basin Drama (available in park bookstores) in addition to other literary works.

This program offers visual and performing artists, composers, and writers the opportunity to live and work in Great Basin National Park. The selected resident(s) stay in a small cabin in the park for two to four weeks in the fall. No stipend is offered. Residents are required to present one public program in which they describe their work in relation to the park and its natural and cultural resources. Residents must also donate one original piece of their work to the park's permanent museum collection.

To date, Great Basin National Park has hosted photographers Trish and Deon Reynolds, stained-glass artist Kay Malouff and poet P. D. Weddington.

**For more information, visit [www.nps.gov/grba/supportyourpark/artist-in-residence.htm](http://www.nps.gov/grba/supportyourpark/artist-in-residence.htm)**

# A Trip to Snake Creek Canyon



Head up Snake Creek Canyon to seek out autumn's colors (NPS photo) or to relax by the stream (photo by L. Belica).

A new journey lies in wait just eight miles south of the town of Baker, in Snake Creek Canyon. Located in the heart of Great Basin National Park, its endless attractions await your discovery. Just follow Hwy 487 south towards Garrison, Utah until you see the sign for Snake Creek Canyon. Turn right and let the adventure begin. The road is well maintained for the first four miles until you reach the Spring Creek Fish Rearing Station. The Nevada Division of Wildlife runs the station and welcomes visitors from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Stop in, say "hi" and check out the young trout.

Continue your journey by following the road past the rearing station into the rising walls of Snake Creek Canyon. From this point forward, a high-clearance vehicle is recommended, for the road becomes semi-maintained and un-plowed in winter. At mile five, you'll enter Great Basin National Park. From here it is eight miles and 2000 ft. of elevation change until the end of the road. Enjoy, for you'll be going from Nevada's most common forest, the Pinyon/Juniper woodland, to one of its rarest, a flourishing evergreen forest of fir, spruce, and pine. With the winding nature of the road and a 25 mph speed limit, give yourself one hour to complete the roundtrip drive.

Each season adds something new to the scenery around the road. In the spring and summer, a virtual cornucopia of flowers awaits your discovery. The explosion of colors and shapes along the drive is a way for flowers to attract a pollinator. In the fall, the canyon becomes emblazed in the fiery red, yellow, and orange hues of the aspen and cottonwood trees, making the trip a memory not soon forgotten. Winter starts in November with the slow accumulation of snow. By

mid-December, one can cross-country ski or snowshoe up the road and experience the stark silence and clear beauty of the frozen winter world.

For people who have the time and ability, the end of the road can mark the next step in your journey. If you have a more restful spirit, the journey continues at the large campsite at the end of the road. Located under aspens in a grass covered meadow, and enhanced by the symphony of nearby Snake Creek, it beckons for a good nap, a nice read, photography, and wildlife and bird watching. For people who seek parts unknown, the journey continues with several paths that lead to distant places seldom traveled. One of them starts near the campsite at the end of the road, the Johnson Lake Trail. The trail is 3.6 miles long (one-way) with 2450 of elevation gain. Just traveling the first mile will leave you with your mouth open in wonder. Grass covered meadows, ancient boulders the size of houses, and some of the mightiest aspens you'll ever see create amazing and unexpected scenery. If you decide to continue up the trail, you'll pass through the Johnson Lake Historic Mining District and end at beautiful, subalpine, Johnson Lake.

Your journey will only end when you want it to, for the amount of things to do is endless in Snake Creek Canyon. When it does finally reach completion, don't forget about this remarkable, and little known, place and make plans to return. However, if a joyful experience is to be repeated, then we all must remember to tread lightly, to take only pictures and leave only footprints. It's amazing what a new journey, even in a familiar place, can reveal. "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks" (John Muir).

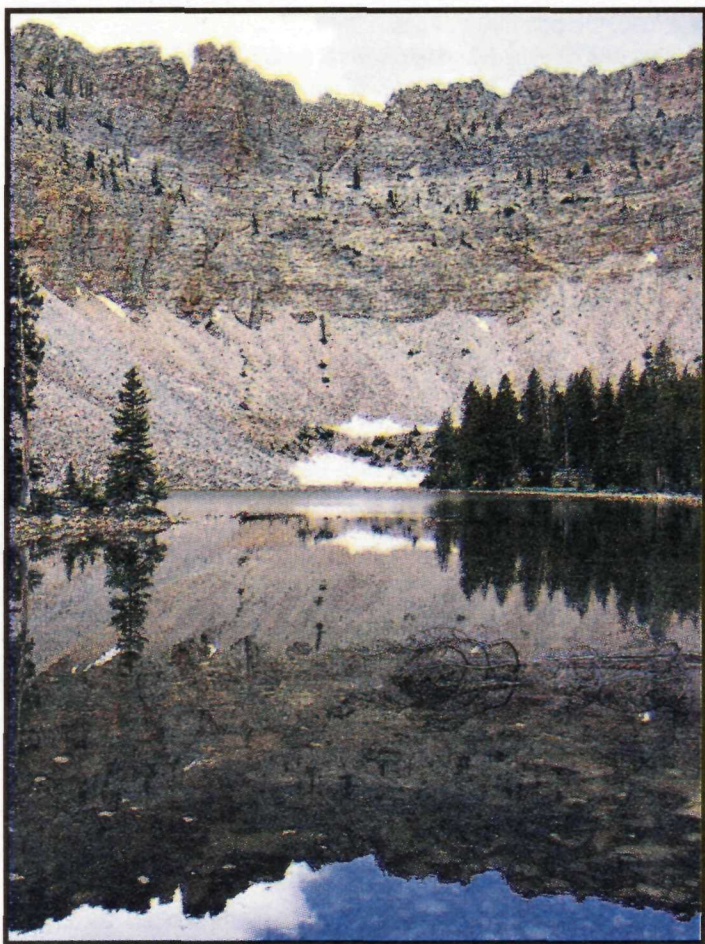


# Grab Your Pole!

Tucked away in the mountainous and forested terrain of Great Basin National Park are beautiful streams and alpine lakes that are bordered by wildflowers in the summer, autumn colors in the fall, and are home to several types of trout year-round. During your visit consider taking time to explore one of the park's streams and fish for a campfire meal or hike up through the forests to an alpine lake to fish till your heart's content while enjoying the scenery and peacefulness of this unique national park.

A variety of trout fishing is available with five types of trout found here; rainbow, brown, brook, and Bonneville and Lahontan cutthroat trout. Rainbow and brown trout dominate Lehman Creek around the lower and upper campgrounds and a trail between them follows the stream making a stroll with fishing poles an easy late-afternoon activity. Baker Creek has mostly brown and brook trout although rainbows and even a few Bonneville cutthroats can be found in some sections, and anglers are rarely disappointed with their catch rates—even in the campgrounds.

Although the Lahontan cutthroat trout is the most widely distributed and well known native trout of Nevada, the native trout here in Great Basin National Park is the Bonneville cutthroat trout. The valley east



Baker Lake is the one alpine lake in the park with fish and has brook and Lahontan cutthroat trout, it's a long hike, but a rewarding destination. Photo by C. Wonderly.



To see one of the beautiful — and still relatively rare — Bonneville cutthroat trout, head to upper Snake Creek.

of Great Basin National Park, Snake Valley, was once a part of ancient Lake Bonneville (that many thousands of years ago extended across much of Utah and into parts of southern Idaho and western Wyoming) where Bonneville cutthroat trout originated. Today, the eastern slopes of the Park and the mountain ranges to the north are the far western edge of the Bonneville cutthroat trout's native range. Known as the "West Desert" Bonneville cutthroat trout, they differ genetically from other populations of Bonneville cutthroat trout found elsewhere and represent thousands of years of adaptation to the conditions of this area.

Decades ago, Bonneville cutthroat trout were thought to have been eliminated from much of their historic range (including the area within and around the Park), from a combination of historic land, water, and fisheries management practices. In 1999, park biologists found an unexpected population of pure Bonneville cutthroat trout in a small park stream. In collaboration with state and federal agencies and support from angling groups, Great Basin National Park has been working to restore Bonneville cutthroat trout and other native non-game fishes to select streams over the past ten years. Because rainbow trout hybridize with Bonneville cutthroat trout and brown and brook trout can out-compete them for food and habitat, the park's restoration projects are restricted to a few select streams in which the native aquatic community that historically occurred (including Bonneville cutthroats and other native fishes such as mottled sculpin, speckled dace, and redbreast shiner). Here the Bonneville can thrive without the threats posed by the non-native trout. Strawberry Creek and the upper section of Snake Creek are managed as Bonneville cutthroat fisheries.

If you have the time during your visit, enjoy exploring Great Basin National Park and its streams and lakes before resuming your journey through the desert. And if you do go fishing, remember to pick up a Nevada fishing license (available in Baker).

## PHOTO CONTEST

Enter your favorite photos of your visits to America's Federal recreation lands by entering the 2010 Share the Experience Photo Contest\* for a chance to have your photo grace the front of the 2012 Federal Recreation Lands Pass. From June 1st to December 31st, you can submit up to three photos for the chance to earn national recognition for your picture. Great prizes include: Olympus digital cameras, trips to a Federal recreation area, Federal Recreation Lands Passes and more! For another chance to win, at the end of the photo submission period, the public will be invited to vote for their favorite photo. Each time you vote, you will be entered to win an Olympus camera! Enter by visiting [www.sharetheexperience.org](http://www.sharetheexperience.org), or pick up a brochure and entry form while visiting a Federal recreation land this year. You could have the next winning photo to adorn the Federal Recreation Lands Pass!

*\*The Share the Experience Photo Contest is sponsored by Olympus Imaging America Inc. and the National Park Foundation in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service.*



# Hiking Information

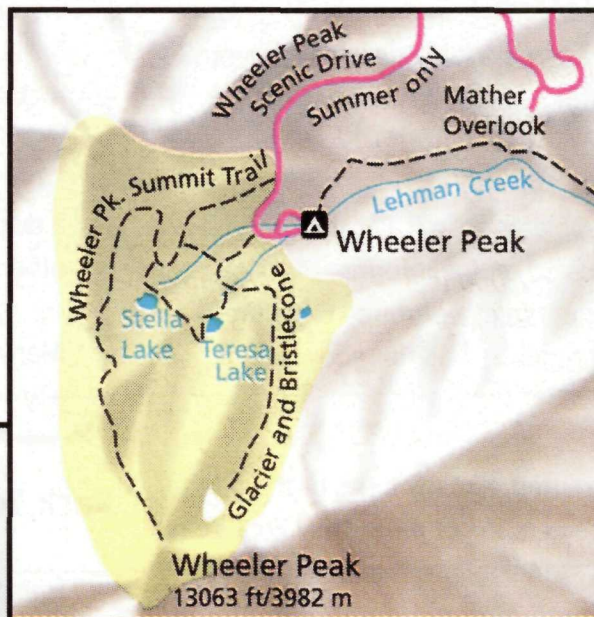
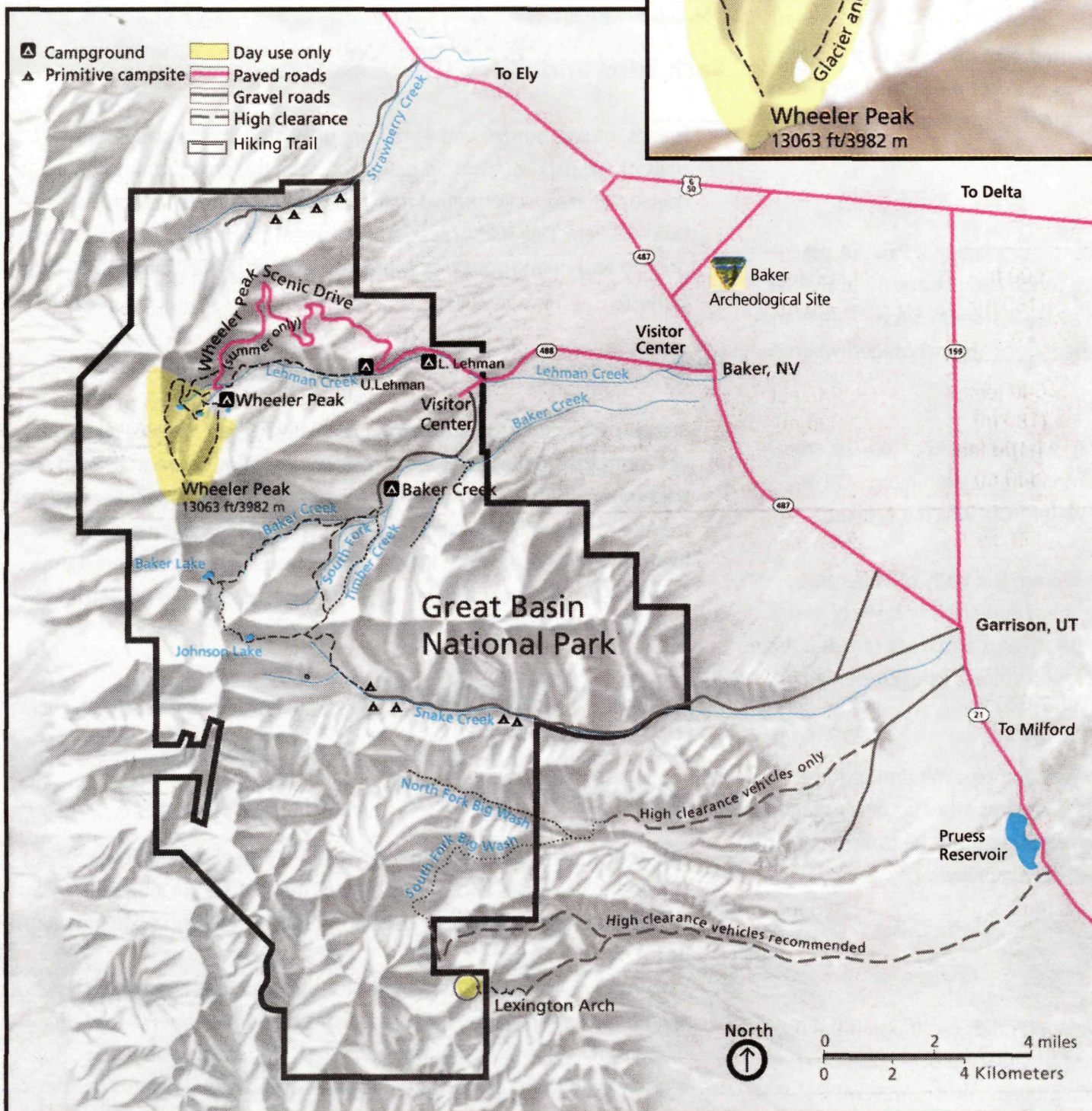
	Round-trip Distance	Elevation Gain	Starting Elevation	Description
<b>Mountain View Nature Trail</b>	0.3 miles (0.4 km)	80 feet (25 m)	6,825 feet (2,080 m)	This is a leisurely walk in the pinyon-juniper forest. The trail guide (available for loan at the Lehman Caves Visitor Center) describes the geology and ecology of the area. The trail starts at the Rhodes Cabin next to the visitor center.
<b>Lehman Creek Trail</b>	6.8 miles (11 km)	2,050 feet (620 m)	7,750 feet (2,360 m)	This trail can be accessed from trailheads in both the Wheeler Peak and Upper Lehman Creek Campgrounds. It passes through diverse habitats, paralleling a creek for parts of the trail. <i>Flagged for winter use.</i>
<b>Osceola Ditch Trail</b>	9.6 miles (16.0 km)	445 feet (drop) (136 m)	8,565 feet (2,635 m)	Begin at the signed pullout on the Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive. Walk downslope through ponderosa pine, white fir and Douglas fir trees to the remnants of an 18 mile long channel built by gold miners in the 1880's. The trail follows the old ditch towards Strawberry Creek.
<b>Wheeler Peak Trail</b>	8.2 miles (13 km)	2,900 feet (890 m)	10,160 feet (3,100 m)	This hike should be started very early in the day because of the risk of afternoon thunderstorms. Along most of the route, the trail follows the ridge up to the Wheeler Peak summit. It is easiest to begin the hike from the Summit Trailhead parking area. Day use only.
<b>Alpine Lakes Loop Trail</b>	2.7 miles (4.4 km)	600 feet (180 m)	9,800 feet (2,990 m)	The trail passes two beautiful alpine lakes, Stella and Teresa Lakes. There are good views of Wheeler Peak. Begin at the Bristlecone Trail parking area, near the Wheeler Peak Campground. Day use only.
<b>Bristlecone Trail</b>	2.8 miles (4.6 km)	600 feet (180 m)	9,800 feet (2,990 m)	Interpretive signs in the bristlecone pine grove explain the lives and significance of these ancient trees. The Glacier Trail continues beyond the bristlecone pine grove to the only glacier in Nevada, nestled beneath Wheeler Peak. Day use only.
<b>Glacier and Bristlecone Trail</b>	4.6 miles (7.4 km)	1,100 feet (340 m)		
<b>Pole Canyon Trail</b>	4 miles (6.4 km)	600 feet (180 m)	7,000 feet (2,150 m)	This hike starts east of the Grey Cliffs Campground area and crosses a small bridge. Once a road, this primitive trail passes through different forest communities, along the creekbed, and into several small meadows. If you are looking for a longer, more strenuous hike, ask a ranger how to connect to the Timber Creek Trail.
<b>Baker Lake Trail</b>	12.0 miles (19.4 km)	2,620 feet (800 m)	8,000 feet (2,440 m)	The trail begins at the end of the Baker Creek Road. It offers nice views of the surrounding peaks and ends at Baker Lake, an alpine lake with beautiful cliffs behind it. Just over a mile up the trail is the cut-off for the loop trail. Pass through ponderosa pines and a beautiful meadow, then return via the South Fork Baker Creek Trail.
<b>Baker Creek Loop</b>	3.1 miles (5 km)	870 feet (270 m)	8,000 feet (2,440 m)	
<b>South Fork Baker Creek/ Johnson Lake</b>	11.2 miles (18.2 km)	2,740 feet (840 m)	8,000 feet (2,440 m)	This trail also begins from the Baker Creek Road and follows the South Fork of Baker Creek. It then joins with the Johnson Lake Trail, passing historic Johnson Lake Mine structures just before reaching the lake.
<b>Johnson Lake Trail (from Snake Creek)</b>	7.4 miles (11.8 km)	2,420 feet (740m)	8,320 feet (2,540 m)	<b>Warning: Do not enter any mine structures: STAY OUT, STAY ALIVE!</b> Johnson Lake can also be reached by starting at the end of Snake Creek Road. This shorter, steeper route offers nice views of the Snake Creek drainage before reaching the historic Johnson Mill and Johnson Lake.
<b>Baker Lake/ Johnson Lake Loop</b>	13.1 miles (21.1 km)	3,290 feet (1,010 m)	8,000 feet (2,440 m)	The Baker Lake and Johnson Lake Trails can be combined into a loop hike. This makes a good overnight trip. The connecting section is a steep route over the ridge between Baker and Johnson Lakes. The ridge top offers spectacular views in all directions. <i>Caution: this trail is very steep and prone to avalanches in winter. Route finding can be difficult.</i>
<b>Lexington Arch Trail</b>	3.4 miles (5.5 km)	820 feet (250 m)	7,440 feet (2,270 m)	This trail leads to a six-story limestone arch. The trail has steep sections. The trailhead is outside of the park, about 25 miles (48 km) south of Baker. The road is unpaved. Check at a park visitor center for road conditions. Dogs on leash are permitted. Day use only.



# Park Map

## Finding Your Way

The maps shown here are meant as orientation maps and should not be used in place of trail maps. If you are planning on hiking, especially in the more remote areas, please purchase a topographic map at a park visitor center. Many trails in the park are primitive, making route finding difficult. It is a good idea to carry a compass and have basic orienteering skills before heading into the backcountry. The bookstores sell 7.5 minute topographic maps and trail maps, as well as books detailing the trails and routes in Great Basin National Park.



## Park Road Access

**Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive** is paved, but steep and winding. Vehicles and trailers over 24 feet in length are not permitted beyond Upper Lehman Creek Campground. The scenic drive is open three miles to Upper Lehman Campground year-round. The upper nine miles of the road are generally open June through October, weather dependent.

**Please drive slowly: speeding is the most common cause of accidents on these roads!**

Travel distances from Baker: Ely: 63 miles west; Delta: 100 miles east; Milford: 85 miles south-east.

**Baker Creek Road** is a graded gravel road and is generally open May through November, weather dependent.

**Remote Park Roads** (Strawberry, Snake, Lexington) are open year-round, but can be muddy or snowy in the winter and spring. High clearance vehicles are recommended for these rough, dirt roads.

## Recreation Hazards

**Altitude Sickness** is a condition brought on by high elevations often in conjunction with strenuous activity. Symptoms include difficulty breathing, nausea, incoherent speech, and headache. The cure is to descend immediately. Altitude sickness can be life threatening. To avoid altitude sickness, ascend slowly, eat lightly and frequently, and drink plenty of water.

**Hypothermia** is a serious condition in which a person's body temperature is lowered. It can occur at temperatures well above freezing. Avoid hypothermia by wearing appropriate, layered clothing. Do not wear cotton clothing as it is very cold when wet. Carry extra clothes, drink plenty of fluids, eat high energy foods, and stay dry. Signs of hypothermia include slurred speech and uncontrollable shivering. If someone shows signs of hypothermia, warm the individual slowly, replace wet clothes with dry ones and give the person warm liquids without caffeine.

**Drinking Water** is essential; it is easy to become dehydrated when hiking in the dry desert air. Carry plenty of water and drink it! All surface water should be chemically treated, boiled, or passed through a filter capable of eliminating harmful microbes and parasites such as giardia.

**Abandoned Mines** are common in the park and the surrounding region. They can be extremely dangerous. Shafts and tunnels are unstable; do not enter them. Great Basin National Park is currently working to make abandoned mine lands safer.

**Driving** conditions in the park can be hazardous. Please obey the posted speed limits. Use lower gears on long downhill sections to prevent overheated brakes. Use of seat belts is required in both Nevada and the park. Please stop only at pullouts. Watch for wildlife and pedestrians. Congestion in the visitor center parking areas can lead to accidents. Please use caution.

**Cell Phones** do not usually work in the park. Do not rely on them!



# Planning for a Safe and Enjoyable Visit

## Camping

Front country camping is permitted in any available developed campsite. There are four developed campgrounds in Great Basin National Park. See page 3 for details.

As a courtesy to your fellow campers, please follow all campground regulations. These regulations are posted on the information kiosk near the self-service fee stations as well as in the campground brochure. You can also contact a ranger or campground host for additional information.

Backcountry camping is free and permitted in many areas of the park. Please go to one of the park visitor centers to get recent trail condition reports and to acquire a backcountry camping informational brochure.

## Fishing

Fishing is a very popular activity in Great Basin National Park. A valid Nevada state fishing license is required for any angler age 12 and older. Nevada state fishing licenses are sold at T&Ds store in Baker. Catch-and-release and use of barbless or de-barbed hooks is encouraged when fishing for Bonneville cutthroat trout.

Within the park, the use of fish as bait, whether dead or alive or any parts thereof except for preserved salmon eggs is prohibited. Other aquatic bait may be used only in the water from which it is taken.

It is unlawful to transport live fish away from the body of water in which they were caught or to release them into another body of water. Introducing other aquatic species to the streams and lakes of Great Basin National Park severely impacts Bonneville cutthroat trout conservation efforts and is strictly prohibited by law.

Please note that there is a three mile irrigation pipeline that divides Snake Creek into two separate bodies. Fish and other aquatic organisms from the section of stream below the pipeline cannot be transferred to any portion of the stream located above the pipeline.

## Mountain Biking

Bicycle riding is allowed only on developed roads (no trails) in the park. The primitive roads within the park and on adjacent BLM lands offer challenges for all skill levels of mountain bikers, and some can be connected into loops. For more information on possible rides, check with a ranger at a visitor center. Please wear a helmet!

## Natural and Cultural Resources

All park resources, both natural and cultural, are protected and therefore may not be damaged, disturbed, defaced, or removed from the park.

These resources include, but are not limited to, animal bones or antlers, live animals, rocks, fossils, standing trees both living and dead, any bristlecone pine wood whether standing or on the ground, arrowheads, rock art and any other historic objects.

For the enjoyment and safety of all visitors, please observe wildlife from a distance. For the health of the animals, please do not feed, touch, or otherwise disturb them from their natural state.

Many of these resources are fragile and irreplaceable, promptly report any violations to park staff.

## Pack Trips and Stock Use

Horses, mules, burros, and llamas are permitted on the backcountry trails of the park, but not on paved roads, in developed campgrounds, developed areas, interpretive trails, the Lexington Arch Trail or the Wheeler Peak Day Use Area. Certified weed-free hay is required two days prior to and during your trip. More information is available at the visitor centers.

## Pets

Pets are allowed in the campgrounds, but they must be on a leash of not more than 6 feet at all times. Pets are not allowed on trails or in the backcountry of the park, except for the Lexington Arch trail. Leashed pets may be exercised in the campgrounds, in front of the visitor centers, and along roads. Please do not leave pets unattended except in your vehicle. These restrictions are intended to prevent harassment of wildlife and to provide for a better experience for other park visitors.

## Vehicles and Traffic Safety

For your safety and the safety of other visitors and wildlife, please abide by posted speed limits signs and traffic control devices.

Due to the steep and winding nature of the Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive, single vehicles and trailers greater than 24 feet in length are not permitted beyond the Upper Lehman Creek Campground parking area.

Only ATVs / OHVs that are properly licensed and registered ("street-legal") are permitted on park roads. Unlicensed all-terrain (ATV) / off-highway (OHV) vehicles are not permitted. Currently, Nevada does not register ATVs/OHVs to be "street-legal" but some other states do. Driving off designated roadways is strictly prohibited.

Please report violations to park Law Enforcement Rangers.

Please DO NOT DRINK AND DRIVE and avoid driving while fatigued. Be aware that animals congregate near roadways in and around the park, especially in the early morning, at dusk and at night.



# Great Activities for Kids and Families

## Alpine Lakes Loop

The trail passes two beautiful alpine lakes, Stella and Teresa Lakes. There are good views of Wheeler Peak. Begin at the Bristlecone Trail parking area, near the Wheeler Peak Campground. Day use only.

## Campfire Programs

Campfire programs are offered in the summer at Upper Lehman Creek and Wheeler Peak Campgrounds, weather permitting. Program topics are related to the Great Basin's cultural and natural resources and programs last 45 - 60 minutes. Check at a visitor center or on campground bulletin boards for the weekly schedule. Please come prepared with warm clothing and a lantern or flashlight.

## Family Adventure Packs

The Adventure Packs Program is an opportunity for families to discover, learn about and document local resources while they explore Great Basin National Park. Each "themed" pack is equipped with a field journal and a large variety of educational tools for young explorers. Three different packs are available for check-out from park visitor centers: *Nature Discovery*, *Tracking*, and *Night Exploration*.



Teresa Lake, along the Alpine Lakes Loop, is a great spot to take a break, though it's a tad chilly for swimming!

## Junior Rangers

The Junior Ranger program is a great way for our young visitors to learn about the park. After completing several activities in the book, attending a ranger program, and doing a service activity like picking up trash at your campsite, participants receive a certificate and a junior ranger badge.

## Lehman Cave Tours

An amazing playground for your child's imagination! The Lodge Room Tour (60 minutes) is recommended for families with young children (details page 4).

# New Firearms Regulations Take Effect

On February 22, 2010, a new federal law came into effect allowing individuals to possess firearms in national parks so long as it is done in accordance with the state and local regulations in which the park unit is located. While visiting Great Basin National Park those wishing to be in possession of firearms must abide by the laws of the State of Nevada.

As of the date of this publication Nevada law does not restrict those in legal possession of a firearm from "open" carry. Nevada law allows for the concealed carrying of firearms so long as the individual has a valid concealed carry weapon (CCW) permit from the state of Nevada or one of the following states: Alaska, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee, or West Virginia. Please note: Nevada does NOT recognize CCW permits issued by the state of Utah.

Federal law prohibits the possession of firearms in designated federal facilities. This includes visitor centers, park offices, maintenance buildings, and in Lehman Caves.

## The following firearms restrictions are in effect:

*It is still unlawful to use, point, or brandish a firearm in a national park.*

*Hunting in Great Basin National Park is prohibited.*

*Possession and use of other types of weapons is still prohibited. These include (but are not limited to) compressed gas or spring powered pistols or rifles, bow and arrows, crossbows, blowguns, spearguns, hand thrown spears, sling shots, paintball guns, irritant gas devices, explosive devices, or any other type of weapon designed to discharge missiles or projectiles.*

It is the responsibility of the individual to understand and comply with all applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws before entering the park. Additional information may be found at [www.nps.gov/grba](http://www.nps.gov/grba) or through the Nevada Department of Public Safety website <http://dps.nv.gov/>.

## Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace refers to a method of outdoor recreation which minimizes the impact on the land and wildlife. These techniques also leave the area more enjoyable for the next hiker. More information can be found at [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org).

### Plan Ahead and Prepare

Plan ahead for your safety and enjoyment and to protect the landscape in order to have a safe, enjoyable vacation with minimal impact to the land. Always carry a map, compass, food, water, rain protection, sunscreen, sunglasses, and warm clothing when hiking.

### Camp and Travel on Durable Surfaces

When trail hiking, stick to the trail. Do not widen it or cut switchbacks. When hiking cross-country, pick your route to avoid impacting fragile areas, like alpine or wetland vegetation.

### Dispose of Waste Properly

Pack out everything you brought in with you, including cigarette butts and food scraps. Bury human waste in a hole 4-8 inches deep. Pick a site at least 200 feet (60 m) from water, campsites, and trails. Do not leave toilet paper on the ground; pack it out with you.

### Leave What You Find

Leave the areas you have used (such as campsites) looking natural. Park regulations prohibit collection of anything, including flowers, rocks, or historical and archeological artifacts. Ask a ranger about exceptions such as pinyon pine nuts and berries.

### Minimize Campfire Impacts

Build small fires in preexisting fire rings or use a camp stove. The park only permits the use of dead and down wood for fires. Bristlecone pine wood may not be burned. Fires are not permitted above 10,000 feet elevation (3,060 m).

### Respect Wildlife

Observe wildlife from a distance. Never feed animals, and keep your food properly stored. Control pets at all times.
























### Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Be courteous, yield to other users on the trail, take breaks and camp away from others, and let nature's sounds prevail.



# Area Services

-  Convenience Store
-  Fuel
-  Gift shop
-  Laundry facilities
-  Lodging
-  Public showers
-  Restaurant
-  RV facilities

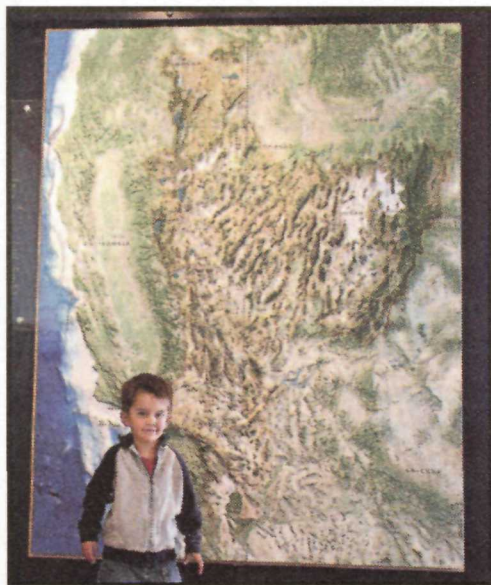
- A** **Lehman Caves Visitor Center & WNPA Bookstore**  
(775) 234-7331 x212  
**Lehman Caves Gift and Café**  
(775) 234-7221  
- B** **Great Basin Visitor Center & WNPA Bookstore**  
(775) 234-7331 x260  
**Baker Ranch Service Station**      
**Ferg's Firewood**  
**Getaway Cabin**   
(775) 234-7272  
**Happy Burro Trad'n Post**   
(775) 234-7115  
**Silver Jack Inn & Art Gallery  
Lectrolux Cafe, Bar & Deli**    
(775) 234-7323  
**T&D's Store, Restaurant & Lounge**    
(775) 234-7264  
**Whispering Elms Campground**      
(775) 234-9900
- C** **Border Inn (open 24 Hours)**        
(775) 234-7300 year-round
- D** **Hidden Canyon Guest Ranch**   
(775) 234-7172 year-round



Mileages listed are from Baker.

To learn more about local services, visit [www.greatbasinpark.com](http://www.greatbasinpark.com).

## Great Basin National Park Foundation



Exhibits at the Great Basin Visitor Center were made possible by the Foundation.

To date, the Foundation has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and has been able to support the Park in several projects, including increasing access to park trails, recording and transcribing oral histories, and exhibits for the Great Basin Visitor Center in Baker, Nevada. The Foundation's support, both financial and otherwise, makes them an invaluable park partner. For more information, find them on the web at [www.greatbasinfoundation.org](http://www.greatbasinfoundation.org).

The Great Basin National Park Foundation was established and incorporated in 1998 under the laws of the State of Nevada to raise funds to assist Great Basin National Park and the National Park Service to achieve the park's mission. Bonnie Bryan, wife of Senator Richard H. Bryan, of Nevada, served as the Founding Chairperson. The Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization.

## Western National Parks Association

Established in 1938, WNPA operates bookstores at sixty-five National Park Service sites throughout the western United States, with a mission of promoting the preservation of the national park system and its resources by creating greater public appreciation through education, interpretation, and research. WNPA has contributed more than \$40 million to the National Park Service, generated through store sales and member support. WNPA supports parks by producing more than a half million free interpretive items every year.

Currently, the association has more than 200 publications in print, and many new products are introduced every year, such as the new book on Great Basin National Park published in 2007. A catalog of these WNPA publications and hundreds of additional educational products, on a variety of subjects such as national parks, archeology, American Indians, biology, geology, history, cooking, and children's interests is available in the Great Basin National Park visitor center bookstores. You can find those titles not immediately available in the bookstores at our online store at [wnpa.org](http://wnpa.org).

WNPA supports Great Basin National Park in many ways, such as funding supplies, the park's Junior Ranger program, and the printing of this newspaper.



# Snake Valley Businesses

## **The Border Inn**

24-hour service. Motel (25 rooms with Direct TV), restaurant (full menu + daily specials), bar, slots, pool table, video games, showers, gas, diesel, phones, laundry, and souvenirs. Also convenience store and ice. 22 RV spots—full hookups and pull-through spaces. Located on the Utah-Nevada state line on Highway 6 & 50. 13 miles from the park. (775) 234-7300.

## **D Bar X Lighting & Horns-A-Plenty Antler Art**

Hand-crafted chandeliers, wall sconces, tables and more using natural renewable antlers, wooden wagon wheels, and old-fashioned oil lanterns. Thousands of happy customers worldwide since 1993. UL-Approved. All products guaranteed. The workshop, located 17 miles from Baker, is open by appointment. Complete catalog with more than 200 items available on-line at [www.Horns-A-Plenty.com](http://www.Horns-A-Plenty.com). Call for an appointment or a free color catalog. (800) 467-6599.

## **Ferg's Firewood**

Campfire wood—\$5.00 per large bundle. Self-serve, 24-hour availability. Two locations in Baker—follow the signs. Proceeds go to a local, hard-working student's college fund.

## **GAS-TOILETS-LAUNDROMAT-SHOWERS at Baker Sinclair.**

Gas & Diesel, Coin Laundry (wash & dry) in downtown Baker, public restrooms, and showers (\$3). (775) 234-7323.

## **The Getaway Cabin**

Tired of motels? How about privacy in a clean, comfortable cabin located in the town of Baker. Room for the whole family. Satellite TV, wireless internet available, fully equipped kitchen, towels and linens provided, fenced yard with picnic area and barbecue. Small pets OK. (775) 234-7272.

## **Happy Burro Trad'n Post**

Located in downtown Baker. We are open daily in summer, 8-6pm, or just knock on the door of our RV. Featuring fresh dried fruits, nuts & jerky. A good selection of sodas & power drinks. American Indian and Southwest jewelry & other crafts; knives featuring Booker, Swiss Army, and others; Black Hills Gold and silver jewelry (including Harley Davidson); t-shirts; and colorful rocks, crystals, and geodes. For our customers, come in & enjoy FREE WIRELESS INTERNET, a cup of coffee or a glass of cold water. We validate Highway 50 "The Loneliest Road" PASSPORT. Bring in this ad for a 20% discount on purchases of \$10.00 or more. (775) 234-7115.

## **Hidden Canyon Guest Ranch**

Bed and Breakfast in luxury lodge, or camping in teepees or cabins. Full meal packages available by reservation only. Pheasant hunting packages. Campsites, hot showers, recreation area, children's playground, heated pool, trout

fishing, hiking, farm animals. Relaxing environment by running water. Great for retreats or reunions. 14 miles from Baker, in the mountains at the eastern edge of the park, with private access to Big Wash Trail. Open year-round. Reservations required. Hidden Canyon Ranch, P.O. Box 180, Baker, NV 89311. [www.hcr-nv.com](http://www.hcr-nv.com) (775) 234-7172.

## **Lehman Caves Gift and Café**

Located adjacent to the Lehman Caves Visitor Center. Famous for our homemade ice cream sandwiches, we also serve breakfast, lunch, snacks, hand dipped ice cream cones, malts, shakes, frozen treats, and home-baked desserts. The gift shop has Great Basin and Lehman Caves souvenirs, apparel, cards, mugs, books, plush animals, toys and games, pottery, wood and metal arts, jewelry, local and Great Basin crafts, camping and travel items, and bagged ice. Open April through October. (775) 234-7221.

## **Silver Jack Inn & Lectrolux Restaurant-Deli-Bakery-**

**Groceries-Espresso-Book Store-Gallery-Cozy Inn rooms,** café with patio & private garden dining. Restaurant open daily 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. (9:30 p.m. Fri-Sat). Full bar—espresso, liquor, 36 microbrews and 25 wines. Also sports equipment rentals (mtn. bikes, snow shoes, X-C skis). Art & Antiques Gallery on site (ceramic, furniture, photography, painting, sculpture, crafts). Guided hikes. Homemade desserts and assorted goodies. Free primitive camping when campers patronize restaurant and/or grocery store. (775) 234-7323. [www.silverjackinn.com](http://www.silverjackinn.com)

## **T&D's Country Store, Restaurant, and Lounge**

In business for over 20 years. Store open 7 days/week, carries large supply of groceries, beer, wine, liquor & soda, ice, fishing tackle, camping supplies, and NV fishing/hunting licenses. Restaurant serves lunch & dinner 7 days/week. Chef "T" has 35+ years of culinary experience. Well known for our pizza, but have a large variety of delicious Italian, Mexican, American and Vegetarian dishes at affordable prices. Dine in bright, cheery sunroom or on relaxing, outdoor covered patio. Full-service bar—Chef "T" can mix up some incredible gourmet cocktails! Entertainment includes pool table, dart board, and surround-sound system. Open year-round (reduced hours in winter). Located in downtown Baker. (775) 234-7264.

## **Whispering Elms Motel, Campground & RV Park**

5 miles from Great Basin National Park, located in beautiful Baker, NV. Offering 25 full-service RV sites, 6 clean motel rooms, bar, large grassy areas for tents, many shade trees, coin laundromat, and clean showers. Bar open daily. Open Spring-Summer-Fall. (775) 234-9900.

## Regional Directory

### Chambers of Commerce

#### **White Pine County, NV**

(775) 289-8877

#### **Delta, UT**

(435) 864-4316

#### **Beaver County, UT**

(435) 438-5438

### Recreation Information

#### **Humboldt-Toiyabe Nat'l Forest**

(775) 289-3031

#### **Ely District BLM**

(775) 289-1800

#### **Fillmore District BLM**

(435) 743-3100

#### **Bryce Canyon National Park**

(435) 834-5322

#### **Cathedral Gorge State Park**

(775) 728-4460

#### **Cedar Breaks NM**

(435) 586-9451

#### **Death Valley National Park**

(760) 786-2331

#### **Fremont Indian State Park**

(435) 527-4631

#### **Lake Mead NRA**

(702) 293-8990

#### **Timpanogos Cave NM**

(801) 756-5238

#### **Ward Charcoal Ovens & Cave Lake State Parks**

(775) 728-4460

#### **Zion National Park**

(435) 772-3256

### Road Conditions

#### **Nevada DOT**

(877) NVROADS (687-6237)

#### **Utah DOT (Winter Only)**

(866) 511-UTAH (8824)

#### **California DOT**

(800) 427-7623

*Great Basin National Park does not endorse the enterprises listed here, but we do wish to thank them for their generous support in producing this publication as a visitor service.*



# People in the Great Basin



Fremont trapezoidal figures can be seen at Pictograph Cave. NPS photo.

Incredible views and nature abound within Great Basin National Park; and a glimpse into the past may be hidden around every corner. Whether the clue is of a historic cabin or a prehistoric stone tool, it offers a hint of the perseverance it took to live in these sometimes harsh climates. It is important to remember the feelings that you experience while exploring the park. Leaving the artifacts and buildings, which include: prehistoric artifacts, rock art, historic trash, historic buildings, etc., as you found them will allow others to experience the same feelings of joy and awe.

Over 13,000 years ago hunters with small family groups came to the mountains and valleys of the Great Basin. They camped along the shorelines of prehistoric lakes, gathering plants and animals for food and making tools and homes. For over 10,000 years people explored new areas as environments and resources changed. Around 1,500 years ago groups, such as the Fremont, began settling in valleys where they grew and cultivated corn and other plants. They gathered wild plants, fish, small and large game, berries, and pine nuts in the mountains. Later groups such as the Shoshone, Goshute, and Paiute followed game and gathered wild plants in season. These earliest native explorers carved and painted images on stone along creeks and ridges to mark special places and give recognition for what nature provided.

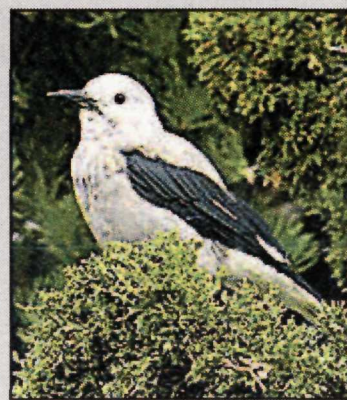
In the mid 1800's newcomers, explorers and settlers began 'taming' the Great Basin. Springs and streams were diverted into ditches, flumes, and/or pipes to ranches, farms, and mines. Forest resources were used for building on neighboring ranches and communities. Mineral resources pulled prospectors to the high peaks leaving evidence of their exploration in cabins, adits, and even trash piles. Lush vegetation was used for the grazing of sheep and cattle. Aspen carvings along trails note their passing camps. The use of these natural resources altered streams, vegetation, and wildlife habitat rapidly. Many of these alterations can be seen within the park, some examples: Osceola Ditch and the 100 year old Lehman Orchard.

Whether you are exploring the backcountry or picnicking along Lehman Creek you are surrounded by the human story of Great Basin National Park. One arrow point or broken bottle can be the key to understanding another chapter of our history. With the thrill of discovery also comes the

## Nature's Harvester

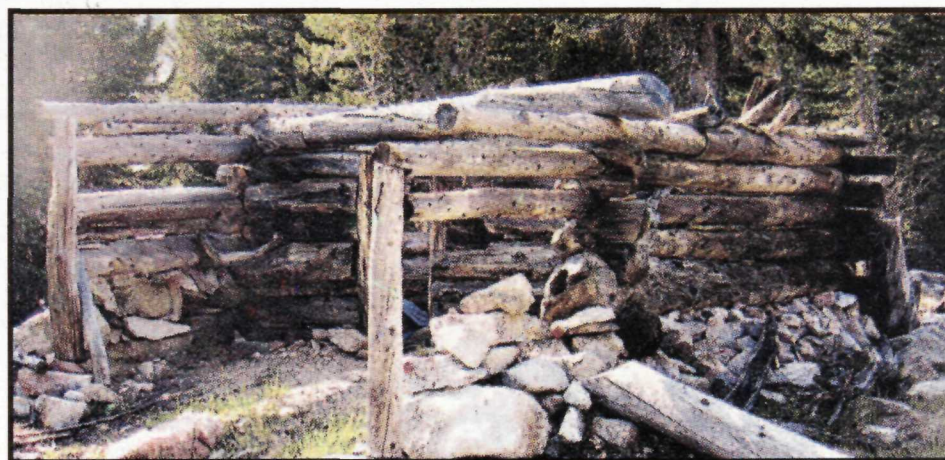
When hiking the trails in Great Basin National Park, keep your ears and eyes open for a curious bird that flits around from tree top to tree top. This bird, the Clark's nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*), with its grey body and black and white wings is a intriguing sight as it flies and frequents the pine forests in the park. In the Great Basin, they are commonly found in the limber, bristlecone, and pinyon pine groves in high elevations in the park looking for pine seeds. These crafty birds have very sharp, long beaks that allow them to collect many pine nuts from the cones. They often will stuff hundreds of seeds in a small pouch under their tongue as they take them to caches where they will save them for the winters to come. Each bird can store up to 30,000 seeds in a few weeks!

Not only are these birds depending on pine trees for food, but the trees are depending on the bird as well. Seeds that are left untouched in the caches under ground may become seedlings. One of the primary ways these types of pine tree's seeds are dispersed is by the Clark's nutcracker technique of caching seeds. This is a great example of how interrelated life can be in Great Basin National Park.



If you're interested in seeing a Clark's nutcracker, keep your eyes open on the high elevation trails especially in the summer months. The Alpine Lakes Loop and the Bristlecone trails are both excellent areas to spot this energetic bird. Listen for loud screeching calls and black and white wings fluttering about in the pine forests of Great Basin National Park.

responsibility to protect these important artifacts and buildings for future generations. Enjoy, but do not destroy, damage, or move these clues to our past. Archeologists use these artifacts and buildings to learn more about the past. Remember that all artifacts and historic buildings are protected by law. Collecting or damaging them is prohibited on public land and in the National Parks. These laws are in place to help all of us protect what is ours, the land and the stories it can tell if we only look around the corner.



All historic objects—whether pottery fragments, log cabins or rusted cans—are clues to the past. Please leave them where you find them! NPS photo.



# Bighorn Sheep



Photo by D. Hanks.

Nevada currently has the largest bighorn population in the lower 48 states.

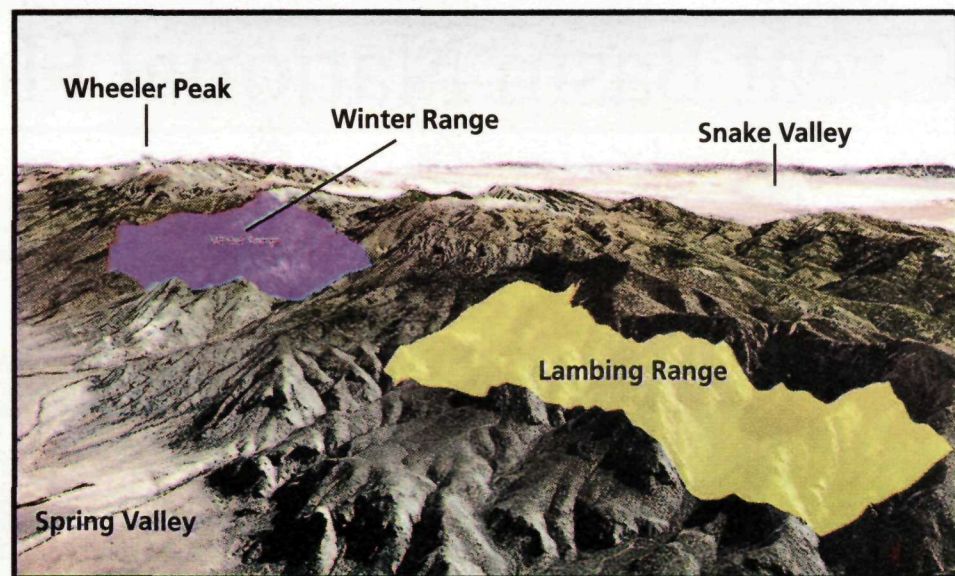
Bighorn sheep were once the most numerous big game animal in the Great Basin. They were described more frequently by early explorers than mule deer and elk, and were an important food source for Native Americans, who captured the images of bighorns on rock art throughout the region. In spite of such historical abundance, bighorn sheep declined precipitously and were extirpated from the Snake Range by 1940, primarily due to overhunting, habitat degradation, and potential disease transmission from domestic livestock.

The mission of the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) is “To protect, preserve, manage and restore wildlife and its habitat for their aesthetic, scientific, educational, recreational, and economic benefits to citizens of Nevada and the United States”. Under this mission, NDOW has aggressively pursued a program of trapping and transplanting bighorn sheep across the state. This program has restored three subspecies of mountain sheep into their historic range. Thanks largely to these efforts; Nevada currently has the largest bighorn sheep population in the lower 48 states.

Nevertheless, restoration efforts in the South Snake Range, which includes Great Basin National Park, have been only marginally successful. In 1979 and 1980 a total of twenty bighorns from Colorado were released into the South Snake range, west of Wheeler Peak. While this population has persisted, it has not substantially increased and is currently estimated at 20-25 individuals.

Reestablishment of a viable bighorn population in the South Snake Range is also an important goal for Great Basin National Park, whose mission is “to preserve for the benefit and inspiration of the people a representative segment of the Great Basin of the Western United States possessing outstanding resources”. Bighorn sheep require large areas of expansive open habitat and are an umbrella species, whose presence indicates healthy ecosystems and ecosystem processes. For the Great Basin, which is defined biologically by the boundaries of sagebrush, viable bighorn populations also indicate healthy sagebrush ecosystems.

Great Basin National Park and the Nevada Department of Wildlife have formed a partnership with a goal of reestablishing a viable bighorn sheep population on the South Snake Range. Four ewes and two rams have been captured, tested for disease and overall health, and outfitted



GPS collars help researchers to locate sheep and identify their seasonal ranges.

with satellite linked GPS collars. Initial findings suggest that while winter habitat is limited, ewes are utilizing recently burned areas as overwintering and lambing habitat. Consistent with most bighorn populations, ewes are apparently lambing in extremely steep, rugged areas. Disease and nutrient level testing show that the sheep are generally healthy.

Following this initial study, a larger restoration project is planned. The primary objective is to augment the South Snake Range bighorn herd with additional bighorn from Nevada. When considering augmentation, an important concern is disease transmission between bighorn and domestic sheep. Currently, several bighorn sheep herds in the western U.S. are undergoing pneumonia epidemics, with losses being reported from Nevada, Washington, Utah, Wyoming and Montana. While the exact mechanism of this epidemic is unclear, it is likely related to stressful environmental conditions which predispose bighorns to pneumonia, coupled with potential transmission of pathogens from domestic sheep. Domestic sheep grazing in Great Basin National Park ended in 2008. However cooperation with local grazing operators will be vital to a successful augmentation.

Additional questions about bighorn sheep in the South Snake Range that are currently being addressed include: habitat utilization, survival, recruitment, fecundity, age class structure, sex ratios, and metapopulation dynamics between the North and South Snake Range herds. The potential for bighorn augmentation in the South Snake Range is high. Several recent high elevation fires have expanded bighorn habitat and bighorn are extensively utilizing these areas. The bighorn sheep population was once estimated at 10-15 individuals but is currently at 20 – 25, suggesting that habitat conditions have improved.

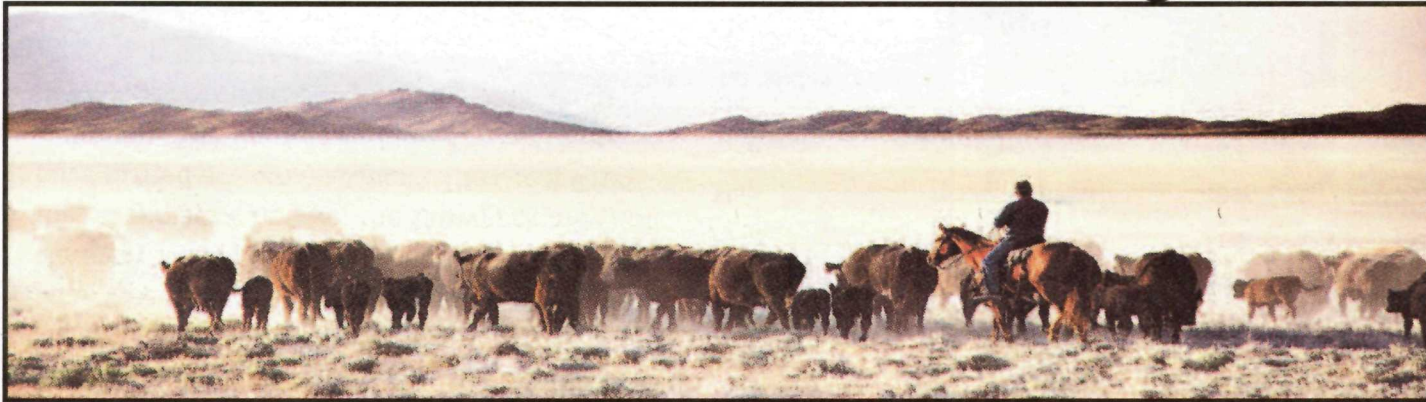
The ultimate goal of this restoration effort is a viable bighorn sheep to the South Snake Range and Great Basin National park. A viable bighorn population will provide viewing opportunities for park visitors, reestablish metapopulation processes between the North and South Snake Ranges, and allow limited, controlled harvest on public lands outside GRBA.

Bighorn sheep are an iconic species and an important part of the ecosystems and cultural heritage of the Great Basin. The successful restoration of bighorn herds to the Snake Range will serve as a testament to the science based wildlife and land management practices of NDOW and the public land management agencies in eastern Nevada.





# Great Basin National Heritage Area



Cattle grazing has a long history in the Great Basin and is still common today. Photo by B. Roberts

In 1998, citizens of Millard County, Utah; White Pine County, Nevada; the Duckwater Shoshone Reservation; and the Ely Shoshone Reservation came together to form the Great Basin Heritage Area Partnership (GBHAP). This non-profit organization works to preserve, interpret and promote the heritage of the region, an area with stories of national significance. The GBHAP believes that their efforts will provide educational opportunities and sustainable economic vitality for the region. The Great Basin National Heritage Area was formally designated by Congress in 2006.

The National Heritage Areas program provides resources for the preservation of local heritage. Although this is a federal program, designation as a National Heritage Area does not compromise local interests or control; rather it gives local communities a national designation that helps them obtain funding and other resources to preserve their heritage.

As the local cooperating partner for the Great Basin National Heritage Area, the Great Basin Heritage Area Partnership is in the process of preparing a management

plan for the next 10 to 15 years. One of the goals of Great Basin National Park is to interpret the resources of both the park and the entire Great Basin region. The Great Basin National Heritage Area Partnership is developing stories of the Great Basin that illuminate not only local history but our nation's history as well.

The Partnership has recently updated its web site: [www.greatbasinheritage.org](http://www.greatbasinheritage.org). Please visit the site to learn about more features and history of the Great Basin National Heritage Area.

Points of interest in the Heritage Area are many. Standouts include two National Historic Landmarks: the Nevada Northern Railway in Ely, Nevada and the Topaz World War II Japanese Internment Camp near Delta, Utah, and, of course, Great Basin National Park. Further information and brochures are available at the GBNHP office in Baker at the Old Ranger Station, the park's visitor centers, and local businesses. The GBHAP phone number is (775) 234-7171.

## Climate

There is almost an 8,000 foot (2,400 m) difference in elevation between Wheeler Peak and the valley floor. Weather conditions in the park vary with elevation. In late spring and early summer, days in the valley may be hot, yet the snowpack may not have melted at high elevations. The Great Basin is a desert, with low relative humidity and sharp drops in temperature at night. In the summer, fierce afternoon thunderstorms are common. Weather conditions are highly variable. Please come prepared for all types of weather. It can snow any time of the year at high elevations.

Data from Lehman Caves Visitor Center, 6,800 feet.

Month	Average Max.	Average Min.
January	41°F (5°C)	18°F (-8°C)
February	44°F (7°C)	21°F (-6°C)
March	48°F (9°C)	24°F (-4°C)
April	56°F (13°C)	31°F (-1°C)
May	66°F (19°C)	40°F (4°C)
June	76°F (24°C)	48°F (9°C)
July	86°F (30°C)	57°F (14°C)
August	83°F (28°C)	56°F (13°C)
September	75°F (24°C)	47°F (8°C)
October	62°F (17°C)	37°F (3°C)
November	49°F (9°C)	26°F (-3°C)
December	42°F (6°C)	20°F (-7°C)

## Full Moons



Full moon rising. Photo by D. Geary

**Budding Moon**  
May 27, 2010

**Strawberry Moon**  
June 26, 2010

**Blood Moon**  
July 26, 2010

**Moon of the Green Corn**  
August 24, 2010

**Harvest Moon**  
September 23, 2010

**Hunter's Moon**  
October 23, 2010

**Beaver Moon**  
November 21, 2010

**Cold Moon**  
December 21, 2010

**Wolf Moon**  
January 19, 2011

**Snow Moon**  
February 18, 2011

**Maple Sugar Moon**  
March 19, 2011

**Planter's Moon**  
April 18, 2011