

# GRAND TETON



National Park Wyoming



Man and the Tetons

Until 1800, Indians held undisputed sway over the country dominated by the Three Tetons, frequently coming across the passes into the basins on warring or hunting expeditions.

The Tetons probably first became known to white men in 1807-8 when the intrepid John Colter crossed the range on the journey which also made him the discoverer of the Yellowstone country. In 1811 the Astorians, under Wilson Price Hunt, entered Jackson Hole and crossed the range on their expedition to the mouth of the Columbia.

The decades that follow are frequently referred to as the "fur era," for the Tetons became the center of remarkable activities on the part of fur trappers representing both British and American interests. By 1845 the trappers vanished from the Rockies, and during the next four decades the valleys near the Tetons were largely deserted except for wandering bands of Indians who occasionally drifted in.

But the frontier was relentlessly closing in, and one Government expedition after another passed through or near the Teton country. These parties named many of the park's natural features, including Leigh, Jenny, Taggart, Bradley, and Phelps Lakes, and Mount St. John.

In the late 1880's came the first settlers. They entered by the Gros Ventre River and Teton Pass, and settled first in the south end of the valley. Two old homesteads have been partially restored as historic sites: Menors Ferry near park headquarters and the Cunningham place on the east side of the valley.

Among the later settlers were those men who recognized that this beautiful area should be preserved for all people. They had perspective, and a strong feeling that the region should be protected from exploitation.

In 1929 the Teton Range and the lovely lakes at the mouths of the deep canyons were assured protection by the establishment of Grand Teton National Park. But it was obvious that part of the valley, with its own charms, was also in need of protection. Thus, the Jackson Hole area was made a National Monument in 1943; in 1950, Congress set aside the upper valley in a greater Grand Teton National Park.

The gross area of the park is now almost 500 square miles, of which about 98 percent is in Federal ownership. The park is roughly rectangular, about 24 miles wide and 38 miles long.

**Administration**

Grand Teton National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The National Park System, of which this park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.

A superintendent, whose address is Moose, Wyo. 83012, is in immediate charge of the park.

**THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—bears a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute to the progress and prosperity of the United States, now and in the future.

**FOR SAFETY'S SAKE . . .**

**AND FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE PARK:**

*Drive within posted speed limits. Report all accidents to the nearest ranger station.*

*Secure a permit for campfires outside designated campgrounds. Be sure campfire is out before you leave it. Be equally careful with cigarettes and smoking articles.*

*Camping along the roadside or in other undesignated areas without a permit is prohibited. When back-country camping, burn or pack out all refuse.*

*Feeding or molesting wildlife is prohibited. Large animals are dangerous, especially bears. Keep a safe distance.*

*Picking flowers, collecting rocks or minerals, defacing signs or buildings—all are illegal.*

*Pets must be on a leash or otherwise restricted. They are not permitted on trails.*

*A Wyoming fishing license is required to fish in park waters. Boat permits are required for boating in the park.*

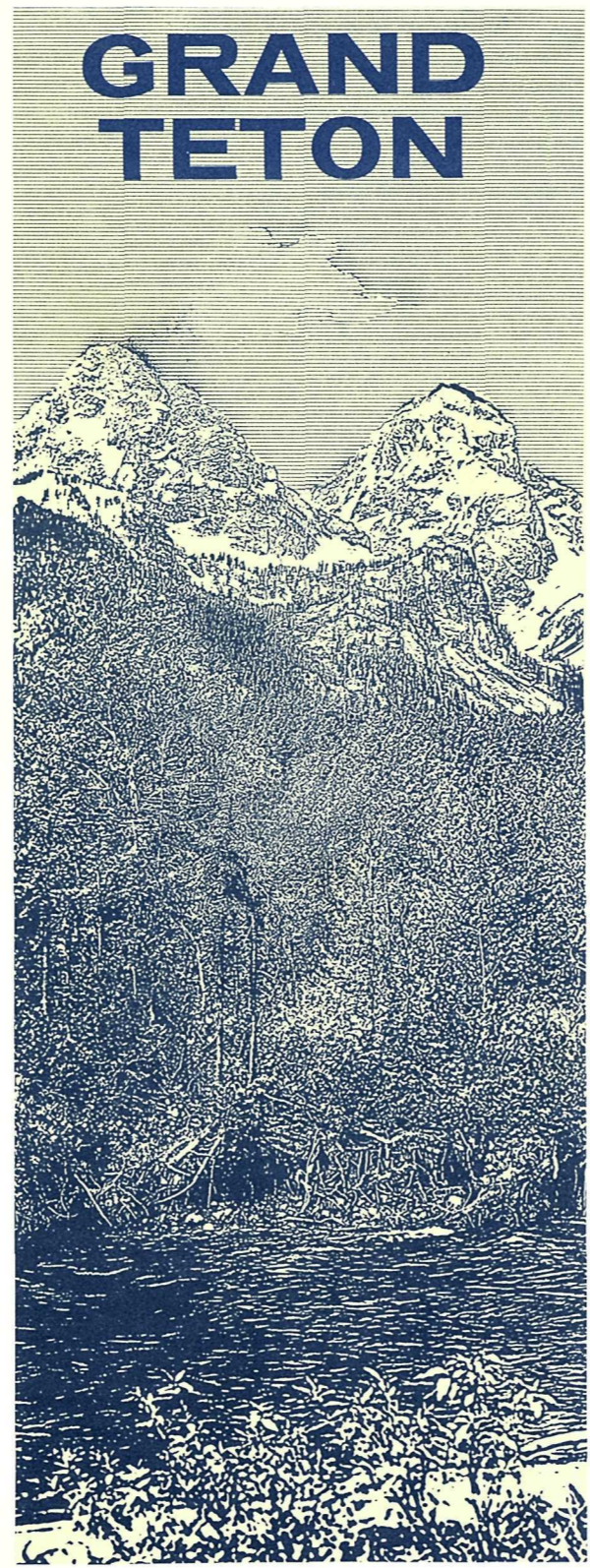
*Register at the Jenny Lake Ranger Station before climbing. Report your return from each expedition. DO NOT ATTEMPT A SOLO CLIMB UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.*

*Register at park headquarters or at the nearest ranger station if you plan to hike or climb other than an established trail.*

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

Revised 1968

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**



National Park Wyoming

**The Grand Tetons are among the noblest creations in the American West, thrusting out of an almost level basin, the Jackson Hole, in a congregation of blue-gray pyramids soaring more than a mile above the sagebrush flats and morainal lakes.**

**Teton's Geological Story**

The Grand Tetons are striking examples of the fault-block type of mountain. The steep eastern front is the result of a recent geological uplift of the range along a great fracture line—a fault—in the earth's crust. Similar appearing mountains like the Sierra Nevada in California and many of the desert ranges of the Great Basin also owe their shapes to block faulting. Movement along these faults has not ceased; the Teton fault shows signs of movement within the last few thousand years.

In striking contrast to the youth of the mountain range is the great age of the rocks themselves. Recent datings by geophysicists reveal that some of the crystalline rocks are about 2,500 million years old! Yet these once-molten veins penetrate rocks which were already ancient and metamorphosed into gneiss when these intrusions came up from below. Here, then, are some of the oldest rocks in the world being brought to light by one of the most recent mountain uplifts.

Erosion has completely cut away great segments of the mountain mass—erosion which probably began with the very first uplift of the mountain block. As uplift proceeded, erosion continued more intensely as the gradients of the

mountain streams increased. These rushing torrents tore away the gullies, creating gorges.

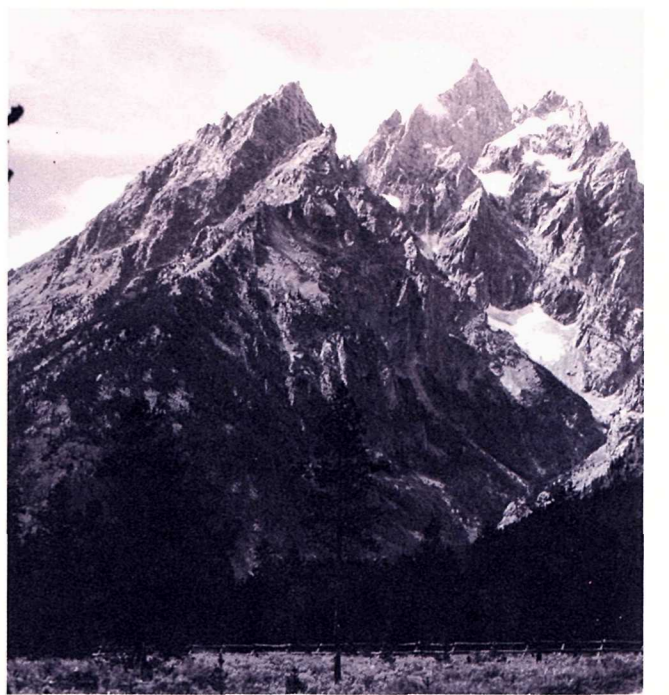
Then came the supreme sculpturing of the ice age. During the past million years several periods of intense mountain glaciation occurred. At the head of each gorge more snow piled up in winter than would melt the following summer. Great masses of snow slowly changed to glacial ice. In response to the inexorable pull of gravity these masses became streams of creeping ice, plucking loose bits of the canyon wall here and grinding away rock obstructions there.

At one time this valley was filled with a great ice sheet, formed by mountain glaciers from the Tetons and from the highlands of the present Yellowstone National Park. Glacial debris (gravel and cobbles) on top of Signal Mountain was dropped by this inland sea of ice.

Fluctuations in the climate melted away this ice sheet, only to bring back glaciers of smaller size during more recent cold periods. As recently as 9,000 years ago valley glaciers flowed from the crest of the Teton Range down to Jackson Hole. Crescent mounds (terminal moraines) left at the snouts of these most recent glaciers now are the natural dams for the lakes at the foot of mountain slopes.

Again the climate moderated and became about what it is today. The ice melted away and, retreating gradually, once again exposed the canyon bottoms. The forces of rain, wind, landslides, and other agents of erosion resumed their attack on the uplifted range. Ice sculpturing is evident in all the major canyons of the park.

With most of the ice now vanished, you can see the effect these glaciers had on the landscape. At the head of each canyon is a rounded natural amphitheater, called a cirque. These were the gathering places for mountain glaciers from which great ice tongues extended downward. The flat U-shaped valleys were carved out by the now vanished ice. Smaller tributary glaciers plucked away at each of the higher peaks of the range. This detailed sculpturing resulted in the noble spires which extend along the range and culminate in the majestic cathedral-like pinnacle of Grand Teton, the noblest peak in the park. Much of the rock waste carried down from the eroding mountain range was strewn in the valley, making up a great deal of the present flat floor of Jackson Hole. Good cross sections of this valley fill can be seen where the Snake River has carved through it. You can see the entrenched valley at several overlooks on the Jackson Hole Highway.



The Tetons, then, have had a long, intensive experience in the hands of the elements. First ripped out of an ancient part of the earth's crust and pushed upward by tremendous forces from within, they have since been carved by the forces of erosion. Most significant were the ice age glaciers which sculptured the rock masses into their present intricate pattern.

Although the present glaciers are a mere remnant of the king-size masses of the ice age, they are still quarrying away into the face of the mountains. No one can confidently predict if glaciers will once again extend and fill these valleys or when additional mountain uplift might occur. There is no reason to think, however, that either process has come to an end. Thousands of years from now the scene which delights the visitor today may be quite different.



### **The Wildlife**

All of Grand Teton National Park is a sanctuary—and in the valley saunter elk, deer, and bison. A pond-side vigil might be rewarded by the sight of feeding moose. But even if no moose appear, the vigil itself, in this land of almost unbelievable solitude and beauty, will be an enjoyable experience.

Mule deer range from the lowest parts of the valley all the way to the tree line. The chipmunk, golden-mantled ground squirrel, and other smaller mammals are surprisingly bold: they will tease you by scampering along the trail in front of you, but will disappear in a flash if you approach them.

Among the barren rocks live pika (cony) and marmot. Beaver were busily at work long before this area ever became a park, and they are still at it. Look for examples of their work along the Snake River and its tributaries.

A float trip down the Snake River is rewarding for the bird watcher. The bald eagle, osprey, Canada goose, great blue heron, screech owl, great horned owl, sparrow hawk, yellow-bellied sapsucker, red-shafted flicker, raven, chickadee, nuthatch, and brown creeper all nest in the woodlands along its banks. Among the smaller birds, the dipper (water ouzel), magpie, mountain bluebird, and western tanager may be seen.

One of the great prizes is, of course, sighting the rare trumpeter swan. An equal thrill is watching, as the first light of dawn begins to light up the Tetons, the sage grouse in his strutting courtship in the spring on the sagebrush-covered benchlands east of the Snake River.

More than 200 species of birds have been identified in the park.



### **Trees, Shrubs, and Wildflowers**

A stroll on the valley floor or on one of the trails into the high country will take you through forests of lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, limber and whitebark pines, alpine fir, and Douglas-fir. Cottonwoods grow in profusion along the streams, together with willows and aspens—important food for moose and beaver.

In the valley and on intermediate terrain are stands of sagebrush in open or unforested sites, silverberry bushes glistening on the sandbars, and creeping mahonia with prickly, holly-like leaves.

A summer visitor to Jackson Hole—often called the valley of flowers—can expect to see only a fraction of the floral displays of wild geranium, scarlet gilia, balsamroot, blue lupine, larkspur, fleabanes, penstemons, and cream-colored clusters of wild buckwheat. Yet travelers can scarcely motor the length of the valley without encountering the Indian paintbrush, Wyoming's State flower. The bracts and upper leaves (not the flowers) give the plant the appearance of a brush dipped in red paint.

In the high country are small clumps of tiny, brilliant, blue flowered, alpine forget-me-nots. On mountain slopes can be seen blue columbine and glacier lilly.



### **Camping in the Tetons**

Main campgrounds are Colter Bay, Signal Mountain, Jenny Lake, Gros Ventre River, and Lizard Point. The tree-shaded sites have parking turnouts, tables, and cooking grates. There are comfort stations and, at Colter Bay, laundry facilities and showers.

Tents only are permitted at Jenny Lake campground. Other campgrounds are open to all types of units. Utility connections are available only in the concessioner-operated trailer village at Colter Bay. The organized-group campground is also at Colter Bay; reservations are required for groups, and can be obtained by writing the park superintendent.

### **Mountaineering**

It is doubtful if anyone views the rugged Teton Range without at least wondering what it must be like to stand on the summits of the peaks. Thus, mountain climbing has become a major outdoor activity in Grand Teton National Park.

**Mountain climbing is hazardous, requiring different degrees of conditioning and experience for various climbs within the park. You must register at the Mountaineering Headquarters at Jenny Lake Ranger Station before attempting a climb of any mountain within the park. Climbing by yourself is not permitted.**

Since solo climbing is not allowed, quite frequently individual climbers meet at the ranger station and make up parties. Many an enduring friendship among climbers has begun in this manner.

Climbing instruction and guide service are available at Jenny Lake.

In a short time you will find yourself sitting under a tree near Hidden Falls, being checked out on ropes, carabiners, and pitons. Your companions will be young and old from all parts of the United States, and some from other countries.

When you are given permission to climb a major peak like "The Grand," Mount Owen, or Mount Moran, you set out one afternoon with a guided party for the overnight bivouac in the saddle of the mountain. Final ascent is made in the early hours of the next morning, with the return to the valley the evening of the same day. Other peaks can be climbed in a single day.

Climbing the major peaks in Grand Teton National Park is strenuous and demanding, but they are among the most popular climbs offered in the United States.



### **Follow the Teton Trails**

An unbroken wilderness not too many years ago, Grand Teton National Park is now penetrated with some 200 miles of trails. Some lead to high mountain passes and lakes above tree line, others through the valley.

The trails, suitable alike for travel on foot or on saddle horses, are 3 or 4 feet wide, free of boulders, and many are of a grade so moderate they may be followed by old or young with a minimum of physical exertion.

An easy way to get acquainted with the beauties of Grand Teton is to take the half-day hike to Hidden Falls. It may begin or end with a boat trip across Jenny Lake; the falls are only half a mile from the landing on the farther shore. Join the naturalist's party at the museum; he will give you much that can serve as a background for visiting other sections of the park.

If you want to try more intensive exploring, to "head for the back country," or just to hike away casually from the crowd for a few hours, you will find the booklet *Teton Trails* helpful. A copy may be purchased at information and visitor centers within the park.

Use of the trails is encouraged, but many of them traverse country which has changed little since man's entry into the area. Let reason and prudence guide your actions. Stay on the trails; short-cutting is hazardous. **If you wish to hike or climb other than an established trail (whether you are going to climb a mountain or not), you must register at park headquarters or at the nearest ranger station.** Remember, animals in the park are wild; for your own safety, give them a chance to move out of your way.

### **Fishing and Boating**

Fishing beckons almost everywhere, in stream or lake. The best stream angling is from July through September after the currents have subsided and cleared and the fish have become reaccustomed to feeding on adult insects. *A Wyoming fishing license is required.*

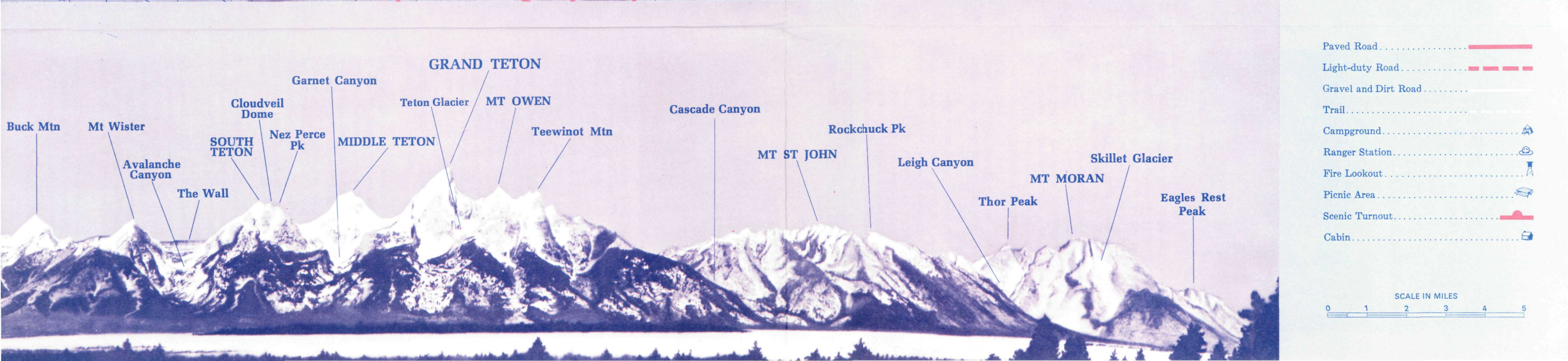
A ride down the Snake River in a rubber raft will carry you through an unspoiled wonderland. You glide noiselessly past dense forests or open glade on either side, watching for birds and mammals all the way. Here and there the familiar panorama of the Tetons appears on the western horizon.

Another enjoyable trip is the boat cruise around Jackson Lake. This takes you to the far shore, where you look deep into the wilderness country of canyons yet unmarked by trails and up the slopes of mountains without names. On moonlit nights there are picnic cruises, with campfire suppers on one of the islands. The moonlight behind the jagged peaks outlines each one in dramatic silhouette.

Canoeists have a choice of many waters. Powerboats are permitted on Jackson and Jenny Lakes; on Jenny Lake, motors are restricted to a maximum of 7.5 horsepower. Sailboating and water-skiing on Jackson Lake are also popular activities. Some hardy swimmers even brave the water, but it never really warms up.



# GRAND TETON



- Paved Road
- Light-duty Road
- Gravel and Dirt Road
- Trail
- Campground
- Ranger Station
- Fire Lookout
- Picnic Area
- Scenic Turnout
- Cabin

SCALE IN MILES  
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