



Photo by John Cwiklik

## The Most Beautiful Spot in Texas

by Dave Bieri

In 1921, Wallace Pratt, a geologist with Humble Oil and Refining Company, visited the Guadalupe Mountains. Pratt came to West Texas in order to purchase oil leases for Humble, but ended up finding a landscape that he formed such a deep and lasting connection to, that it became the focal point of his life. While visiting Pecos, Texas, in 1921, Judge Drain, a local lawyer, asked Pratt to accompany him on a trip to “the most beautiful spot in Texas.” Driving through the rather barren West Texas desert, Pratt became somewhat suspicious of Judge Drain’s enthusiastic description of the place they were to visit. Finally the group reached McKittrick Canyon and discovered the beauty of a hidden forest of maples and oaks, with a free flowing stream forming travertine dams and small cascades. Pratt immediately agreed that this was indeed the most beautiful spot in Texas.

The Guadalupe Mountains are often referred to as an “island in the desert.” The mountains rise up out of the desert and support a variety of plants, animals, and even entire ecosystems not found anywhere in the surrounding arid lands. McKittrick Canyon is one of the best places to witness the diversity of life that can be found in the Guadalupe. It is the only place in the park where a year-round spring-fed stream flows, creating a unique riparian ecosystem. Although the canyon is named for Felix McKittrick, an early rancher in this area, it was Wallace Pratt who was one of the first people to realize its beauty and significance. When Pratt first visited McKittrick Canyon, the landscape was even more spectacular than it is today. Extreme flooding events in 1943 and 1968 destroyed many of the travertine dams, and caused much of the stream to go underground. Pratt claimed that “it was this myriad succession of miniature lakes and miniature waterfalls, with luxuriant verdure bordering them, and the majestic rock walls surrounding them, that made McKittrick Canyon the most beautiful spot in Texas.”

Wallace Pratt fell in love with this spectacular canyon and immediately acquired a quarter interest in a part of the canyon that was for sale at the time of his visit. When the stock market crashed in 1929, he was able to buy out his partners and become owner of the major portion of McKittrick Canyon. This soon became his summer vacation getaway as he had a stone cabin constructed at the junction of North and South McKittrick Canyons. During the summers, the Pratts and their three children would leave the heat and humidity of Houston to spend time in the Guadalupe Mountains. When Pratt retired he and his family moved to McKittrick Canyon and had a new home built at the mouth of the canyon. This new house that Pratt called the “Ship on the Desert” was designed to look like an oil tanker. Today the Ship on the Desert is used as a research facility for scientists and educators coming to learn more about this unique place. In the 1950’s

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### When is the Best Time to Visit?

There is usually some color mid-October to mid-November, with the peak color change being between the last week of October and the first week of November. If you arrive early, you will find a range of colors from green to yellow, orange, and red. If you arrive after the peak color change, beauty can still be found on the remaining late-changing trees and in scattered leaves around boulders and agaves. McKittrick Canyon is open from 8-6 p.m. during daylight savings time, and 8-4:30 p.m. the rest of the year.

### What Should You Bring?

Plan on bringing plenty of water and food for your hike. The hike to Pratt Cabin and back takes 2-3 hours roundtrip. The hike to the Grotto and back takes 4-6 hours roundtrip. Trail conditions are rocky, so wear sturdy footwear. Dress in layers, as weather conditions can change suddenly. There are no restrooms or trashcans in McKittrick Canyon. Please pack out all of your litter.



NPS photo



NPS photo

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## Telephone and Web Directory

**Carlsbad Caverns National Park**  
3225 National Parks Hwy  
Carlsbad, NM 88220  
(505) 785-2232  
www.nps.gov/cave

**Guadalupe Mountains National Park**  
HC60, Box 400  
Salt Flat, Texas 79847  
(915) 828-3251  
www.nps.gov/gumo

**Carlsbad Caverns Guadalupe Mountains Association**  
Operates both parks' bookstores. Books may also be purchased by mail or online.  
PO Box 1417  
Carlsbad, NM 88221  
(505) 785-2486  
(505) 785-2318 FAX  
www.ccgma.org

**Food, Lodging, and Camping**  
**Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce:**  
(505) 887-6516  
www.carlsbadchamber.com

**Van Horn, Texas Visitors Bureau:**  
(915) 283-2682  
www.vanhornadvocate.com/  
communityad1.shtml

**Weather Conditions**  
Carlsbad Weather Watch:  
(505) 885-1848

**Road Conditions**  
New Mexico: (800) 432-4269  
Texas: (800) 452-9292.

**Emergency:  
call 911.**

## Greetings!

Welcome to Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. Carlsbad Caverns National Park, a World Heritage Site since 1995, features a spectacular cave system of highly decorated chambers. Guadalupe Mountains National Park protects one of the world's best examples of a fossilized reef. Both parks are located within the Chihuahuan Desert, a fascinating place to explore desert life.

Fall and Winter bring their own special rewards. Mid-October to mid-November the colorful changes in maples, ash, and sumac delight thousands of visitors to Guadalupe Mountains National Park. At Carlsbad Caverns National Park, the summertime crowds are gone and the cave can be experienced in its natural state of quiet. Both parks offer hiking opportunities. Rare winter snows are short-lived events and can only add to the beauty of these natural areas.

The Park staff are here to help make your visit a truly memorable event. They will be happy to help you plan your visit and provide information. Guided tours at Carlsbad Caverns can enrich your park experience.

John Benjamin  
Superintendent  
Carlsbad Caverns National Park

## Thank You, Volunteers!

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the dedicated effort and talent that volunteers have brought to Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. Volunteers play a vital role in fulfilling our mission of preserving our natural and cultural heritage and sharing that heritage with the visiting public. Volunteers do everything from staffing the information desk, roving interpretation, patrolling surface and cave trails, to trail maintenance, research, cave restoration, and more. To become a volunteer contact...

Carlsbad Caverns  
Jason Richards  
(505) 785-3144

Guadalupe Mountains  
Doug Buehler  
(915) 828-3251 x105

These tours offer a variety of caving experiences, from easy lantern tours to challenging trips involving crawling and squeezing through tight passages.

Guadalupe Mountains National Park has over 80 miles of hiking trails to explore, ranging from wheelchair accessible paths to strenuous mountain hikes, including an 8.4 mile roundtrip hike to Texas' highest mountain Guadalupe Peak (8,749'). As you travel and spend time in the area, please remember to keep safety in mind. Road conditions may be icy. Deer and other wildlife are plentiful—enjoy watching wildlife, but remember they often move across roads, especially in the evenings; be vigilant while driving during twilight hours. Hikers should be prepared for rapidly changing weather conditions. Hikers can become dehydrated in our dry climate; carry plenty of water. Always check with a ranger before venturing into the backcountry.

We are wholeheartedly committed to our mission of preserving and providing for the enjoyment of our nation's most outstanding treasures. We wish you a rewarding experience in every way.

John V. Lujan  
Superintendent  
Guadalupe Mountains National Park

## Traveling with A Pet?

On a warm day the temperature inside a car can kill a pet. Do not leave an animal unattended; the kennel is the only safe place for your pet.

At **Carlsbad Caverns**, pets are not permitted in the cave or at bat flight programs; during the day your pet may be cared for at the kennel for a small fee.

At **Guadalupe Mountains**, pets are not allowed on trails, in the backcountry, in buildings, or at evening programs; they are permitted in the campground. In any national park, your pet must be physically restrained at all times.



## Hey Kids! Become a Junior Ranger!

Many national parks across America offer a Junior Ranger program for children to encourage interest in their national parks and to promote a sense of stewardship and ownership for these special places that they come to visit. This self-paced educational program allows the participant to earn a patch and/or certificate upon completion of required activities that teach the children about the park resources. Age appropriate activities are included in the Junior Ranger booklet, typically for pre-kindergarten through upper elementary-aged children.

At Carlsbad Caverns, the Junior Ranger program offers activities to teach about the resources both above ground and below the surface (including plant

and animal life of the desert, cave features, and history of the park). Younger children have opportunities to color and draw, find specified objects on a visual scavenger hunt, use their senses to experience their surroundings, and complete games. Older children have opportunities to sequence events, complete word searches, and write stories and poems. Each activity in the booklet is an optional activity depending on interest and age-level. Once the booklet is checked by a park ranger, the participant is presented a Carlsbad Caverns National Park Junior Ranger patch.

The Junior Ranger booklet is available through the Carlsbad Caverns Guadalupe Mountains Association bookstore, located in the visitor center at

the park. There is a charge of \$1.00 to participate in the program, which includes the booklet and patch (given upon completion of the activities). Kids of any age may participate.

At Guadalupe Mountains, participants work through a separate activity booklet and visit points of interest within the park. The booklet accommodates families of varying travel plans. Many of the activities can be completed in the Pine Springs Visitor Center and Museum. Children who complete three activities earn a badge and certificate, while those who do six activities earn a patch in addition to the badge and certificate. There is no charge for participation in the program, but donations are always welcome.

# The Light Man of Carlsbad Cavern

by Dave Thomas

There I was in an area of Carlsbad Cavern that only a handful of people had ever seen. I was in the Kings Palace area of the cave... but I was on a ledge 30 to 40 feet above the main trail. Why was I there? Enter Alvino Dorado—he's in charge of replacing the lights that illuminate the largest cave chamber in the United States.

As visitors walk through the cavern, it is easy to forget the technological wonder the cave is because of the awe-inspiring sights they are experiencing. Three miles of paved trail equal twenty miles of wiring to power the 1,200 individual lights in the cavern. Ninety percent of these lights are fairly close to the paved trails and are easy to maintain, but there are several that require vertical caving ability to reach them to replace the burned out light. Some of these jobs are not for the faint of heart. One pit in the main corridor is a straight ninety-foot drop to get to the light fixture. Another light in the Big Room is located about halfway down the one-hundred-forty-foot drop called the Bottomless Pit. This is what a caver would call exposure... the only thing between you and certain death is a piece of 11 millimeter rope, your caving gear,

and your confidence in your caving skills.

How many rangers does it take to change a light bulb? You can't just hand someone a bulb and expect them to complete the job safely and without damaging the cave. It takes years to become vertically proficient for caving; and then add in the difficulty of getting to some of these out-of-the-way places without causing resource damage. That is the reason why only one person is ultimately in charge of the lights. Alvino follows the same trail he learned from his predecessor years ago to reach and maintain the 1,200 individual lights.

After years of trying to come up with a reliable map, a gentleman named Thomas Rohrer, with the aid of the National Park Service, completed an all-inclusive map consisting of seventeen individual maps. Using this map, Alvino knows the location of all the lights, what light fixture is there, and the type of bulb the fixture requires.

When a bulb is reported to be out, the report is verified, the map is consulted, and the appropriate bulb is chosen... and off Alvino goes. He uses a specially designed backpack that supports the bulbs and is still easy to carry on one's back. He must also trouble-

shoot any electrical problems that he encounters while in the cave. Broken light fixtures, bad ballasts (a regulating device to control the amount of electricity used by a fluorescent light), corroded wiring—you never know what the problem might be.

Not all of the bulbs in the cave are the same. There are incandescents (like those used in your home, only at a higher wattage), mercury vapors, fluorescents, and light emitting diodes (LEDs). The type of bulb used depends upon the degree of illumination wanted. While many people think there are colored lights in the cave, only white lights are used... but there are eleven shades of white light, so the degree of white "color" varies.

Carlsbad Caverns National Park is a spectacular park to work in—I occasionally get to see what others do not. I also continue to be awed by the wonders I see daily, thanks to those rangers years ago who had the foresight to make the Cavern visible to all who come to enjoy the beauty of this place. I am also fortunate enough to get to work with Alvino Dorado, a skilled problem-solver, caver, and the one person who continues to enlighten us all everyday!

## From the CCGMA Bookstore

The Carlsbad Caverns Guadalupe Mountains Association (CCGMA) is a private, nonprofit organization whose main objectives are to provide interpretation for the park visitor and to support the purposes and mission of the National Park Service at Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, and the lands related to them in New Mexico and West Texas since 1957. To date, CCGMA has donated over \$2.7 million to both Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. The goals of CCGMA are accomplished through educational programs using a variety of educational media and scientific investigations resulting in a greater appreciation of those resources being conserved for this and future generations. CCGMA has 3 retail bookstore outlets located at the Carlsbad Caverns, the Guadalupe Mountains, and the Administration office building located in the city of Carlsbad

Books may also be purchased by mail or online.

PO Box 1417  
Carlsbad, NM 88221  
(505) 785-2486  
(505) 785-2318 FAX  
www.ccgma.org

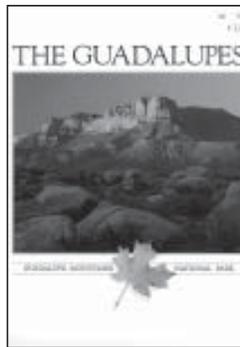
Consider joining CCGMA. As a member you will receive a 15 percent discount on all purchases. This discount is extended to several cooperating associations of other national parks as well. You will also receive the CCGMA newsletter and the Visitor Guide for Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks (2 issues a year). In addition to these benefits you will receive a free book on the work of artist Clark Cox or a coffee mug. Most importantly, your contribution helps further our mission of providing aid to these parks.

**Membership (1 year) \$25.00**

The Guadalupes	\$ 3.00
Stories from Stones	\$ 7.95
Trails of the Guadalupes	\$ 5.00
Carlsbad Caverns National Park:	
Worlds of Wonder	\$ 5.95
Jim White's Own Story	\$ 5.95

Purchases may be made by credit card or check. Include your address and daytime phone number. If ordering by credit card include the card number, the date of expiration, and the signature of the cardholder. The following cards are accepted: American Express, Discover, MasterCard, and Visa. Make checks payable to CCGMA.

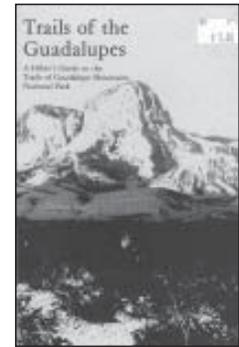
**Shipping and handling charges for book orders are as follows:**  
\$4.00 for purchases up to \$15.00  
\$5.00 for purchases \$16-30.00  
\$6.00 for purchases \$31-50.00



This picture book provides a general overview of Guadalupe Mountains National Park history, biodiversity, and geology. Full color photography throughout, 32 pages, 8.5x11 in. **\$3.00**



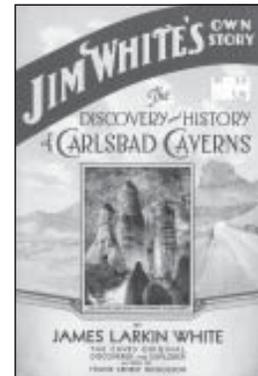
A thorough, but still accessible, discussion on the Guadalupe Mountains geology. Includes sections on cave and speleothem formation. Color photography, 40 pages, 8.5x11 inches. **\$7.95**



More than just a hiking guide, this book also will introduce the reader to the area's cultural and natural history. Black and white photography plus trail maps, 55 pages, 5.5x8.5 inches. **\$5.00**



**Worlds of Wonder**  
This book covers the formation of the Guadalupe Mountains, the creation and discovery of Carlsbad Cavern, history, bats, and Lechugilla Cave. Color photography, 56 pages, 9x12 inches. **\$5.95**



In this book Jim White tells of his initial discovery and early adventures in Carlsbad Cavern. Numerous historic black and white photos, 32 pages, 6x9.5 inches. **\$5.95**

# Carlsbad Caverns

## Tour the Main Cave...

### Spring, Fall, & Winter Hours

Natural Entrance	8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Big Room	8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

### Summer Hours

(Memorial Day -Labor Day)

Natural Entrance	8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Big Room	8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Visitor Center	8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

### Fees

#### Entrance Fees

		Audio Guide
Adults—age 16 and over	\$6.00	plus \$3.00
Children—age 6 to 15	\$3.00	plus \$3.00
Children—age 5 and under	free	plus \$3.00

The National Parks Pass, Golden Age Passport, Golden Eagle Passport, and Golden Access Passport all cover the basic entrance fee.

Entrance fee applies to self-guided tours. Guided tours require an additional fee.

*All fees and tours are subject to change at any time.*

### Reservations

We recommend that you make reservations for guided tours at least six weeks in advance. Some tours fill quickly. Reservations are not necessary for self-guided tours. To make reservations call the National Park Reservation System at:

Reservations	(800) 967-CAVE (2283)
TDD	(888) 530-9796
Cancellations	(800) 388-2733

### Have a Safe Tour

Cave temperature is 56° F (13° C) year-round. A light jacket or sweater and good walking shoes are recommended. Do not wear sandals. For your safety:

- Stay on the paved trail.
- Supervise children closely; children under age 16 must remain with an adult at all times.
- Ask park rangers for help.
- Take prescribed medications with you.
- High humidity in the cave can affect respiratory problems; bring your **inhaler** just in case.
- If you are **DIABETIC**, be sure you have eaten enough calories.
- Leave your baby stroller in the car; child-carrying backpacks are recommended.
- Leave your pet at the kennel, not in your car.

### Protect the Cave

- Never touch, tap, or handle the cave formations; the oils on your skin damage the formations.
- Never take gum, food, or drinks into the cave. Water only.
- Never use tobacco of any kind in the cave.
- Never throw coins or other objects into the pools.

### Photography

Photography is permitted on most tours; however, please use good etiquette. Warn those around you before you flash, keep tripods on the trail, and do not use the rocks as your personal tripod. Video cameras are permitted on the Big Room, Natural Entrance, and King's Palace tours. Please use caution and do not use the ultra-bright lights available on some cameras.



Cavern Supply Company



Cavern Supply Company



Cavern Supply Company

#### Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route

Length: 1.25 miles, 1 hour  
Fee: Entrance fee

This hike is similar to walking into a steep canyon (a descent of about 800 feet in one mile). It is recommended only for those physically fit and healthy; sturdy footwear required. Highlights include the Natural Entrance, Devil's Spring, Whale's Mouth, and Iceberg Rock.

#### Rent the Cavern Audio Guide!

This guide is available for \$3.00 and is essential for both self-guided tours. It offers commentary by park rangers, researchers, and others who are knowledgeable about the cave's science and history.

#### Big Room Self-Guided Route

Length: 1.25 miles, 1.5 hours  
Fee: Entrance fee

Descend by elevator to start the tour in the Underground Rest Area. The non-skid trail is paved and mostly level, although there are a couple of short, steep hills. All visitors to Carlsbad Cavern should experience this tour. Highlights include the Lion's Tail, Hall of Giants, Bottomless Pit, and Rock of Ages. This trail is partially accessible to visitors using wheelchairs, with assistance. The park does not provide wheelchairs. This trail can be accessed after hiking the 1.25 mile Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route.

#### King's Palace Guided Tour

Length: 1 mile, 1.5 hours  
Fee: Entrance fee and \$8.00 Tour Ticket

Tours depart from the Underground Rest Area. Tickets may be purchased at the visitor center; however, reservations are recommended; call ahead. You will visit four highly decorated chambers: King's Palace, Papoose Room, Queen's Chamber, and Green Lake Room. The tour guide will turn out the lights for a blackout experience. The trail is paved; however, there is a steep hill that you must walk down and then back up.

## Surface Activities

#### Services

Facilities include a visitor center, exhibits, bookstore, restaurant, gift shop, and kennel service. Ranger programs are offered daily. Other activities include:

#### Nature Trail

This one-mile paved, partially accessible trail begins near the visitor center and highlights desert plants.

#### Scenic Drive

A one-hour drive through the Chihuahuan Desert, this 9.5-mile gravel road is suitable for most vehicles except trailers and motor homes. Brochures are available for 50 cents. The Scenic Drive is open 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. mid-May to mid-October. It is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. mid-October to mid-May. These hours are subject to change.

#### Rattlesnake Springs

This historic oasis includes a picnic area, shade trees, restrooms, and excellent bird watching. Located 5.5 miles south of White's City on U.S. Highway 62/180, then 2.5 miles west on a signed county road. Day use only.

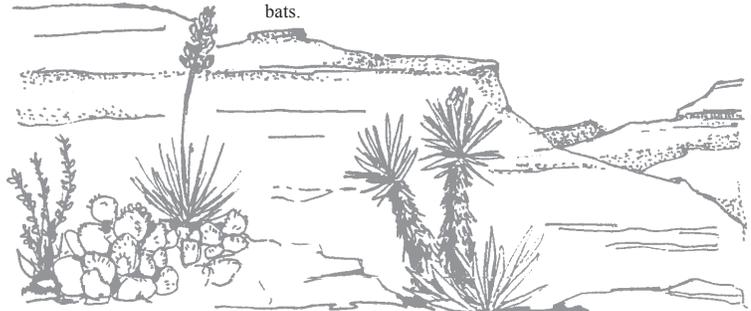
#### Hiking & Camping

The park's wilderness offers day hikes and backcountry camping (permit required). Rangers at the visitor center can provide free permits, trail and weather information, and backcountry camping tips. The bookstore sells topographic maps, which are considered essential for desert hiking.

#### Bat Flight Programs (Summer Only)

A few hundred thousand bats fly from Carlsbad Caverns each evening from mid-May until the bats migrate to Mexico sometime in mid-October. The ranger program generally begins each evening 30 to 60 minutes before sunset at the park amphitheater,

though weather and lightning can cause cancellation of the program. Check at the Visitor Center for the exact time the program starts. **No Flash Photography** is allowed as it may be a disturbance to the bats. This rule is strictly enforced for protection of the bats.



# Carlsbad Caverns

## ...or try something different!



### Left Hand Tunnel

On this lantern-lit tour your guide will highlight cavern history, formations, cave pools, and Permian Age fossils. This is the easiest of the adventure tours on unpaved trails. Be aware that the dirt trail winds over small uneven or slippery slopes and careful footing is required to avoid cavern pools and fragile formations. Lanterns are provided. Tour departs from the visitor center lobby.

### Slaughter Canyon Cave

This moderately strenuous tour is through a well-decorated undeveloped backcountry cave. *Tours depart from the cave entrance at the scheduled time.* It is mandatory for each person to bring a two to four C or D-cell alkaline battery flashlight with fresh batteries. Penlights are not permitted. The route is slippery, muddy, and at times requires a supervised ascent of a 15-foot flowstone slope using a knotted rope.

*Do not drive to the visitor center for this cave tour.* Allow plenty of time to drive to Slaughter Canyon and 45 minutes for the steep and strenuous 0.5-mile hike to the cave entrance. Attempt this hike only if you are in good health. Carry water—the desert is dry, and can be very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Stay on the trail and wear good walking shoes.

### Lower Cave

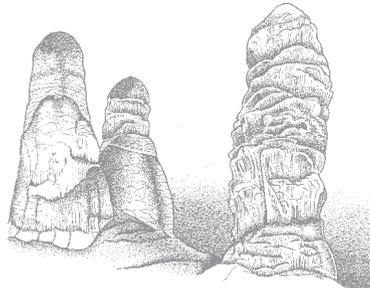
This moderately strenuous tour begins with a ranger supervised descent down a 10-foot flowstone slope using a knotted rope, followed by a 30-foot series of three ladders. Bring gloves and four AA alkaline batteries per person. The park provides helmets, headlamps and optional kneepads. Tour departs from the visitor center lobby. You will see evidence of early exploration, cave pools, and beautiful formations.

### Hall of the White Giant

This is a strenuous, challenging tour to a remote chamber in Carlsbad Cavern. You will be required to crawl long distances, squeeze through tight crevices, and climb up slippery passages. Bring gloves and four AA batteries per person. We provide helmets, headlamps, and kneepads. Tour departs from the visitor center lobby.

### Spider Cave

On this strenuous tour you can expect tight crawls, canyon-like passages, and bizarre formations. Bring gloves and four new AA batteries. The park provides helmets, headlamps, and kneepads. The tour departs from the Visitor Center for a short drive and then a short hike to the cave. Bring water for the hike.



**Cave Tour Reservations:**  
**1-800-967-2283**

Tour	Trail Surface	Offered	Departure Time	Adult Fee	Age Limit	Tour Length	Group Size
King's Palace	Paved trail; 80' hill must be climbed on return trip	Daily	Fall-Spring 10 & 2  Summer 10,11, 2 & 3	Adults \$8 Golden Age \$4 Golden Access \$4 Children (6-15) \$4 Children (4-5) Free	4	1.5 hours	75
Left Hand Tunnel	Packed dirt trail	Daily	9:00 am	\$7.00 and General Admission Ticket	6	2 hours	15
Slaughter Canyon Cave	Strenuous climb required to reach cave entrance. Trail in cave is slippery, uneven, and rocky	Saturday and Sunday (Tours offered daily in summer)	10:00 a.m.	\$15.00	6	2 hours	25
Lower Cave	Must negotiate fifty feet of ladders, variable dirt trails, might get dirty	Monday through Friday	1:00 pm	\$20.00 and General Admission Ticket	12	3 hours	12
<b>Wild Caving – kneepads required!</b>							
Hall of the White Giant	Climbing and crawling, tight squeezes, drop-offs, will get dirty	Saturday	1:00 pm	\$20.00 and General Admission Ticket	12	4 hours	8
Spider Cave	Climbing and crawling, tight squeezes, drop-offs, will get dirty	Sunday	1:00 pm	\$20.00	12	4 hours	8

# Guadalupe Mountains



Rachele Riley



Rachele Riley



John Cwiklik

## Plan Your Trip Wisely!

Facilities and services within and near Guadalupe Mountains National Park are extremely limited. The nearest gasoline stations are 32 miles west or 35 miles east. There is no campstore; bring everything you need with you.

## Information and exhibits

### Headquarters Visitor Center

Elevation 5,740'. On U.S. Highway 62/180, 55 miles southwest of Carlsbad and 110 miles east of El Paso. Open every day except Christmas. Open Memorial Day to Labor Day 8:00 A.M.- 6:00 P.M.; Labor Day to Memorial Day 8:00 A.M.- 4:30 P.M. Information, natural history museum, introductory slide program.

### Frijole Ranch History Museum

The ranch house features exhibits describing historic and current use of the Guadalupe. Grounds include a picnic area near a spring shaded by large oak trees. Restroom available. Staffed intermittently.

### McKittrick Canyon

Highway entrance gate is open 8:00 A.M.- 4:30 P.M., Mountain Standard Time; 8:00 A.M.- 6:00 P.M. Mountain Daylight Savings Time. Closing time changes when Daylight Savings Time begins and ends. Restrooms, outdoor exhibits, slide program.

## Dog Canyon

This secluded, forested canyon on the north side of the park is a great place to begin a backpacking trip for those coming through Carlsbad.

### Ranger Station and Campground

Located at the end of New Mexico Highway 137, 70 miles from Carlsbad and 110 miles from Park Headquarters, at an elevation of 6,290 feet. The campground has nine tent sites and four RV spaces.

## Camping

Water and restrooms are available; but there are no showers, RV hookups, or dump stations. The fee is \$8.00 per night, per site, \$4.00 with a Golden Age or Golden Access Passport. No wood or charcoal fires are permitted; camp stoves are allowed.

### Pine Springs Campground

Located near the Headquarters Visitor Center, there are twenty tent and nineteen RV campsites available on a first-come, first-served basis. Two group campsites are available for groups of 10-20 people. Reservations (for group sites only) can be made by phoning (915) 828-3251.

## Backpacking

Eighty-five miles of trails lead through forests, canyons, and the desert. A free permit is required if you plan to spend a night in the backcountry. Permits are issued at the Pine Springs Visitor Center and the Dog Canyon Ranger Station. Wood and charcoal fires are prohibited. Camp stoves are allowed. Pack out all your trash. Pets are not allowed on park trails. Firearms are not permitted within the park.

Preparation is the key to an enjoyable backpacking trip. Be prepared for changing weather conditions. Carry plenty of water—there are no water sources in the backcountry. Topographic maps, hikers' guides, and information can be found at the Pine Springs Visitor Center and the Dog Canyon Ranger Station.

### Day Hikes at Dog Canyon

#### Indian Meadow Nature Loop

**Easy.** 0.6 miles roundtrip. A guide booklet describes ecology and geology.

#### Marcus Overlook

**Moderate.** 4.6 miles roundtrip. Follow the Bush Mountain Trail to the ridge-top for a view into West Dog Canyon. Trail climbs 800 feet in elevation.

#### Lost Peak

**Strenuous.** 6.4 miles roundtrip. Climb out of Dog Canyon on the Tejas Trail to visit the conifer forest above. Outstanding views from Lost Peak. Trail climbs 1,500 feet in elevation.

## Day Hikes

Entrance Fees (\$3.00 per person 16 years and older) can be paid at trailheads. Good for one week.

Trail-Head	Trail	Roundtrip length	Description
Visitor Center	Pinery Trail	0.75 mile	<b>Easy.</b> Discover the desert as you walk to the ruins of the Pinery, a stagecoach station on the Butterfield Overland Mail Route in 1858. Trailside exhibits; <b>wheelchair accessible.</b>
Pine Springs Campground	Guadalupe Peak Trail	8.4 miles	<b>Strenuous.</b> Hike to the "Top of Texas" at 8,749 feet, for spectacular views. Trail climbs 3,000 feet in elevation. Avoid the peak during high winds and thunderstorms.
	Devil's Hall Trail	4.2 miles	<b>Moderate.</b> Rocky hike in Pine Spring Canyon to the Hikers' Staircase and Devil's Hall. After the first mile the trail drops into the wash. Turn left and follow the canyon bottom to Devil's Hall, where a sign marks the end of the trail.
	The Bowl	9.1 miles	<b>Strenuous.</b> The Bowl shelters a high country conifer forest. Recommended route: Tejas Trail to Pine Top, Bowl Trail to Hunter Peak, Bear Canyon Trail, Frijole Trail back to the campground. Trail climbs 2,500 feet in elevation.
	El Capitan Trail	11.3 miles	<b>Strenuous.</b> Desert lovers will appreciate the rocky arroyos and open vistas while skirting along the base of El Capitan. Recommended Route: El Capitan Trail, Salt Basin Overlook Trail, and return on the El Capitan Trail. Beyond the Salt Basin Overlook the El Capitan Trail continues to Williams Ranch, an additional 4.7 miles one-way.
Frijole Ranch	Smith Springs Loop Trail	2.3 miles	<b>Moderate.</b> Look for birds, deer, and elk as you pass Manzanita Spring on the way to the shady oasis of Smith Spring. Please do not drink the water or wade in the springs. The first 0.2 miles to Manzanita Springs is <b>wheelchair accessible.</b>
McKittrick Canyon	McKittrick Canyon Trail	4.8 miles	<b>Moderate.</b> Follow an intermittent stream through the desert and canyon woodlands to the historic Pratt Cabin. A guidebook is available at the trailhead. One mile beyond the Pratt Cabin is the Grotto Picnic Area and Hunter Line Cabin. Please do not drink the water or wade in the creek. To protect this fragile environment, you are required to stay on the trail.
	McKittrick Nature Loop	0.9 miles	<b>Moderate.</b> Climb the foothills and learn about the natural history of the Chihuahuan Desert. Trailside exhibits.
	Permian Reef Trail	8.4 miles	<b>Strenuous.</b> For serious geology buffs, this trail has stop markers that can be used with a geology guidebook sold at the Visitor Center. There are excellent views into McKittrick Canyon from the ridgetop. Trail climbs 2,000 feet in elevation.

## Hike safely...

- There is no water available along park trails, so be sure to bring plenty with you. One gallon per person per day is recommended.
- Trails are rocky—wear sturdy shoes.
- Carry a trail map.
- Pack warm clothing and rain gear; sudden weather changes are common.

## Protect the park

- Stay on trails; don't cut across switchbacks or create new trails.
- Carry out all trash, including cigarette butts.
- Report any trail hazards to the visitor center.
- Collecting of natural, historic, or prehistoric objects is not allowed.

Weather	Temperatures (F.) Average		Rainfall Average
	High	Low	Inches
Jan	53	30	1.04
Feb	58	35	1.04
March	63	38	0.87
April	71	46	0.57
May	78	55	1.26
June	88	63	1.48
July	87	63	3.08
Aug	84	62	3.77
Sept	78	57	5.22
Oct	71	49	1.41
Nov	61	38	0.65
Dec	57	33	0.67

Average annual precipitation is 21.06 inches.  
Pine Springs Weather Station, Guadalupe Mountains National Park, elevation 5,500'.

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the Pratts moved to Tucson for health reasons. Pratt realized the beauty and significance of his land and lobbied for it to become a national park. He later donated over 5,000 acres of land to the National Park Service. Today, McKittrick Canyon, along with nearly 82,000 acres surrounding it, is preserved as Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

A hike up McKittrick Canyon today will easily illustrate why Wallace Pratt fell in love with this landscape. It is a place where a hiker can experience two of the three major ecosystems found in the Guadalupe. The first mile of the trail passes through a typical Chihuahuan Desert landscape with plant species like lechugilla, yuccas, sotol, prickly pear, cholla cactus, and New Mexico agave. Watch for a variety of desert birds including black-chinned sparrows, canyon towhees, ladder-backed woodpeckers, roadrunners, and canyon wrens, whose enchanting calls will echo off the canyon walls. The canyon is also home to many species of lizards and snakes.

Approximately one mile up the trail hikers will first encounter the stream that makes this canyon unique. Shortly after crossing the stream the canyon begins to change as the trail enters into the riparian woodland ecosystem. Here there are trees that one would not expect to find in a primarily desert environment. Because of the water, trees like the big-tooth maple thrive here. The big-tooth maple is the tree that is primarily responsible for the brilliant fall colors that occur in McKittrick Canyon near the end of October and early November. At this time of the year as the daylight hours shorten and temperatures begin to drop, the maples stop their food making process known as photosynthesis. Chlorophyll, which helps trees to manufacture food, is responsible for the green

color of the leaves. As chlorophyll production shuts down for the winter, the brilliant red, orange, and yellow pigments are revealed.

Although the big-tooth maple is responsible for the most brilliant colors, there are many other trees that contribute to the rainbow of colors that can be seen in McKittrick Canyon. Chinkapin oaks and scrub oaks begin to turn a golden color later in the fall, while gray oaks retain their green leaves all winter. Sumacs turn brilliant shades of red and purple. The Texas madrone, an evergreen, produces brilliant red berries in the fall.

At 2.3 miles into the canyon hikers reach the junction of North and South McKittrick Canyons, and Wallace Pratt's old stone cabin. The cabin provides a nice rest stop before hiking further into the canyon. Beyond the cabin, the trail winds through thicker riparian woodlands, passing pools of water that are home to rainbow trout. Eventually hikers will reach the Grotto, where there are old stone picnic tables and an old cabin belonging to J.C. Hunter. Hunter owned much of the land that now makes up Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

J.C. Hunter, and later his son, J. C. Hunter Jr., shared Pratt's vision of this land someday becoming a national park. Because of these men, today over 86,000 acres of the Guadalupe Mountains and the surrounding desert are preserved for the American people so that future generations will be able to visit, enjoy, and learn from this unique resource. Wallace Pratt had the foresight to realize the potential of this land and was very careful to leave as little impact on this land as possible. As you are hiking through the park today, it is always important to remember our role in helping to preserve our natural heritage.



NPS Photo

Wallace Pratt the Philanthropist. His donation of McKittrick Canyon to the American people became the catalyst that helped create Guadalupe Mountains National Park. His dream was to protect forever a place that people could come to enjoy natural beauty and geologists could come to study.

## Natural Grace: Deer in the Wild

by Doug Buehler

Think about all the wild animals you enjoy seeing in a national park area. Through the years one of the main animals people consistently see are mule deer. Seeing a deer in its natural habitat can renew one's sense of wonder. Mule deer have some amazing characteristics that enable them to survive in the rugged landscape of Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

The first thing one notices about the deer is the size of the ears. They received their common name due to the resemblance of the ears to those of a mule. These large ears swivel to detect danger from any direction and relatively long distances away. The ability to hear well is a big advantage in terrain that varies with many ups and downs.

The soft, large, brown eyes of the mule deer seem to stare right through you. Deer have excellent eyesight. Many times when I am around a deer and they see me out in the open, I have found there is a less chance of spooking them when I play like I could care less if the deer was there or not, than if I try to approach them—a tip for potential deer watchers.

When rapidly moving, the deer not only runs, but also does something that looks peculiar. They seem to bounce in a stiff fashion on all four legs. This movement is called slotting. This method of movement has some real advantages. A deer can jump over obstacles that a predator has to go around. Quick changes in direction are possible with slotting which makes it harder for enemies to catch them. Also they can bound up very vertical terrain with ease and leave behind an exhausted pursuer. I am not sure how the deer evade all the cactus and other sharp pointed plants when bounding away, but they do a great job of landing in the right spot.

The major predators of the deer are mountain lions, coyotes, and eagles. Mule deer are most vulnerable when first born. The spots on young fawns act as an effective camouflage. Fawns have very little scent, another protective characteristic. A predator can come



NPS Photo

very near and not see or smell a young fawn. Deer mature at a rapid rate and are able to do their special trick of slotting relatively quickly after birth.

One of the most noticeable things about a mule deer at certain times of the year are the antlers found on the buck deer. Antlers are different than horns, since they are shed each year, while horns continually grow the entire life of an animal. They start growing in the spring and are fully developed by fall. It is amazing how fast the antlers grow. In fact, look at your fingernails. The composition of antlers and fingernails is basically the same, a chemical called keratin. It is interesting there is seldom major fighting between the bucks with their antlers. The dominant animal that is usually larger in physical and antler size is able to establish dominance without actually fighting. There may be some actual touching of antlers between two bucks, but usually not in a real aggressive manner. When fighting off predators, antlers come in handy. Even the shed antlers on the ground are good for

something. They provide a food source and chewing surface for rodents such as mice and pack rats.

Mule deer are very adaptive in what they eat. They can eat a wide variety of plants including many that other types of mammals cannot easily eat. Deer are browsers as opposed to grazers. As a result they can feed on woody shrubs and other types of vegetation other than grasses. Their digestive system can process plants that are somewhat toxic and hard to digest.

So between hearing and eyesight, a peculiar method of running, special adaptations when young, the growth of antlers and flexible eating habits the mule deer is a real survivor. The next time you see one think about some of these interesting characteristics. Their calm demeanor helps make them fairly easy to see and adds to ones enjoyment of a park. One of the great things about a national park is the fact animals are protected in their natural habitat for all to enjoy now and in the future.

# Area Attractions



## Brantley Lake State Park

(505) 457-2384  
Open all year—24 hours/day.  
Wheelchair accessible.

### Fees

Day Use Only —\$5.00/vehicle  
Camping—\$14.00/night  
(\$10.00 fee for each additional  
vehicle driven into same site)  
Primitive Camping Area  
—\$8.00 per vehicle/night

Located 12 miles north of  
Carlsbad on U.S. 285, the  
campground has 51 sites with  
water and RV electric hookups  
(a few with sewer), a dump  
station, playground, restroom  
with hot showers, shelters,  
tables, and grills.

Other facilities include  
picnic areas with sheltered  
tables and grills, playground, a  
fishing dock, boat ramps with  
docks, and a visitor center.

## Living Desert State Park

(505) 887-5516  
Open daily except December 25.  
Wheelchair accessible.

### Fees

Ages 13 and up—\$5.00  
Children 7 to 12—\$3.00  
Children 6 and under—free  
Group(20+) discounts available.

### Winter Hours

Labor Day to Memorial Day  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Last tour entry—3:30 p.m.



### Summer Hours

Memorial Day to Labor Day  
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Last tour entry—6:30 p.m.

Come face to face with a mountain lion at this unique zoo and botanical garden offering an opportunity to experience the Chihuahuan Desert first-hand. See a large collection of live animals, including the rare Mexican gray wolf, and the roadrunner, New Mexico's state bird. There is also an unusual collection of cacti and other succulents from around the world.

The park is located high atop the Ocotillo Hills overlooking the northwest edge of Carlsbad, just off Highway 285 and features exhibits, an art gallery, gift shop, and refreshments.

## Lincoln National Forest

(505) 885-4181

The forest encompasses 285,000 acres for hiking, caving, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, hunting and sightseeing.

Maps are available at the Guadalupe Ranger District Office located in the Federal Building, 114 S. Halagueno, Room 159, in Carlsbad.

### Sitting Bull Falls

Wheelchair accessible.  
Day use only—no camping.  
Entrance fee—\$5.00 per car.

Seven miles southwest of State Highway 137 on Forest Route 276, this 130 foot falls is one of the highest in New Mexico. Picnic area, trails, and restroom.

### Five Points Vista

Eleven miles south of State Highway 137 on Forest Route 540. A panoramic view of the desert from the top of the Guadalupe Mountains. Interpretive signs explain natural features.

