

Hot Springs

NATIONAL PARK • ARKANSAS

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ADMINISTRATION

Hot Springs National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Inquiries may be addressed to the Superintendent, Hot Springs National Park, Box 1219, Hot Springs, Ark. 71902

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—has a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that 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.

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service



Long before the first Europeans came to these shores, Indians already had discovered the wonders of the hot springs of Arkansas. Tradition says this was hallowed ground; here warriors laid aside their arms and, regardless of tribe or tongue, bathed in peace.

Hernando de Soto and his party came in 1541; they may well have been the first Europeans to bathe in these thermal waters. American development began in 1803, but bathing facilities were only crude canvas shacks and log cabins.

However, medicinal bathing, traditional since ancient times, was reaching peak popularity in Europe, where great spas developed. These traditions, transplanted to the United States, caused the hot springs of Arkansas to become a Federal Reservation. Thus in 1832 was born a great national idea—that this country's natural heritage be held in trust for all people, for all time.

Although the modern bathtub, whirlpool machines, and chlorinated swimming pools have replaced social bathing in the style of the ancients, the tradition endures. Hot Springs National Park keeps its restful yet holiday air, not only in its water programs, but also along its quiet streets, on the Promenade, and on its wooded hillsides. The Hot Springs tradition is ageless.

THE SPRINGS

The springs lie along a fault, or ancient break, in the earth's crust. The water—more than a million gallons daily—flows from the park's 47 hot springs at an average temperature of 143°. Neither season nor climatic conditions appear to affect either the volume or the temperature of the flow.

How nature heats the water is a matter of conjecture. An underground mass of hot rock, chemical reactions near the water, friction, compression, and radio activity—all have been suggested as a source of the heat.

THE WATER

Chemical analysis shows the waters from the 47 springs to be practically identical. Unlike other thermal waters, Hot Springs water is remarkably pure and thus free of offensive odor or taste.

Of the 47 springs, 45 are sealed; water is collected, carefully cooled, and piped to central reservoirs for bathhouse and therapy use. Complicated collecting and cooling systems provide visitors with pure water in properly tempered baths that do not lose the natural gases.

Two springs are kept open so visitors may see waters emerging naturally. These—the Display Springs—are accessible from either Bathhouse Row or the Promenade.

THE BATHS

There are 20 bathing establishments—eight in the park, and 12 in the city—that use thermal waters of the park. All are concessioners of the Federal Government and are subject to regulation and inspection.

The baths—full immersion type—may be taken by direct application to the bathhouses, although a physician's advice is recommended. All bathhouses have facilities for whirlpool baths, showers, massages, and alcohol rubs.

Indigents may avail themselves of the baths at Government expense after having been examined by a local physician who ascertains that the patient suffers from an ailment which might be relieved by the thermal baths. Application under this program should be made to the office of the superintendent.

The Libbey Memorial Physical Medicine Center, on Spring Street, also uses the thermal water in its hydrotherapy program. Patients who suffer from arthritis, general injuries, or nervous system damage often find great relief in the underwater therapy available at the center. *Patients must be recommended by a local federally registered physician.* A list of these physicians is available at the park headquarters.

Several drinking fountains on Reserve Avenue, along the Promenade, and on Bathhouse Row provide hot thermal water. Jug fountains are on Reserve Avenue for those who wish to take the water home; this water must not be sold or used commercially in any way.

CLIMATE AND RECREATION

Hot Springs enjoys a favorable climate all year. The winters are mild and, except for infrequent short intervals, are conducive to outdoor recreation. The mild weather and warm sunshine often is a decided aid to the bath treatments.

Visitors may hike or ride horseback on lovely wooded trails, drive on the park's scenic roads, and fish on nearby Lakes Catherine, Hamilton, or Ouachita. Boat supplies are available at the lakes.

Golf can be played at the Hot Springs Golf and Country Club, and at Belvedere, Oaklawn, and Lakeside Country Clubs.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The five mountains of the park are clothed in dense oak-hickory forests that include scattered groves of shortleaf pine. Flowering trees are abundant in the understory and every season has its rewards. Particularly noteworthy are redbud in summer, and the colorful foliage in autumn. Wildflowers bloom all year; firepinks, black-

eyed-susans, goldenrod, and asters often form lovely roadside displays.

Animal life includes rabbits, squirrels, foxes, opossums, and raccoons; several species of lizards, snakes, turtles, and frogs; and more than 90 species of birds.

PARK PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

At the visitor center, on the corner of Reserve and Central Avenues, you can visit the museum and its panel display depicting the geology of the area and the springs, the natural and human history of the park, and the development of the bathing industry. A 12-minute slide program is shown hourly in the auditorium.

Evening programs and nature walks are scheduled at Gulpha Gorge Campground from June through August. Ask at the visitor center about the naturalist program.

CAMPING

The park's only campground is nestled in Gulpha Gorge, 2 miles northeast of the center of the city. Tables and fireplaces are provided for both tent and trailer campers; there are no electrical or water connections.

HOW TO REACH HOT SPRINGS

By car—U.S. 70 and 270, and Ark. 7.

By bus—Continental Trailways and Wolf, or their connections, serve Hot Springs.

By air—TransTexas, Delta, and Frontier Airlines make daily stops at Memorial Airport, 2 miles west of the park.

THE CITY OF HOT SPRINGS

The city nearly surrounds the park, is a separate municipality, and is not under National Park Service jurisdiction. It has many large hotels offering a choice of American or European plans, smaller hotels, motels, boardinghouses, housekeeping quarters, and furnished or unfurnished cottages. Lists of accommodations and general information are available from the Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce.



REGULATIONS

Public buildings, signs, and natural features must not be disturbed, injured, or destroyed.

Fires are one of the park's greatest perils. Campfires are permitted only in designated sites. Cigarettes or cigars should be completely extinguished before they are thrown away.

Hunting is not permitted in the park.

Private operations. To solicit or sell anything, no matter how minor, is prohibited, except by persons holding a contract with the Federal Government.

Pets are allowed if they are on leash or otherwise confined.

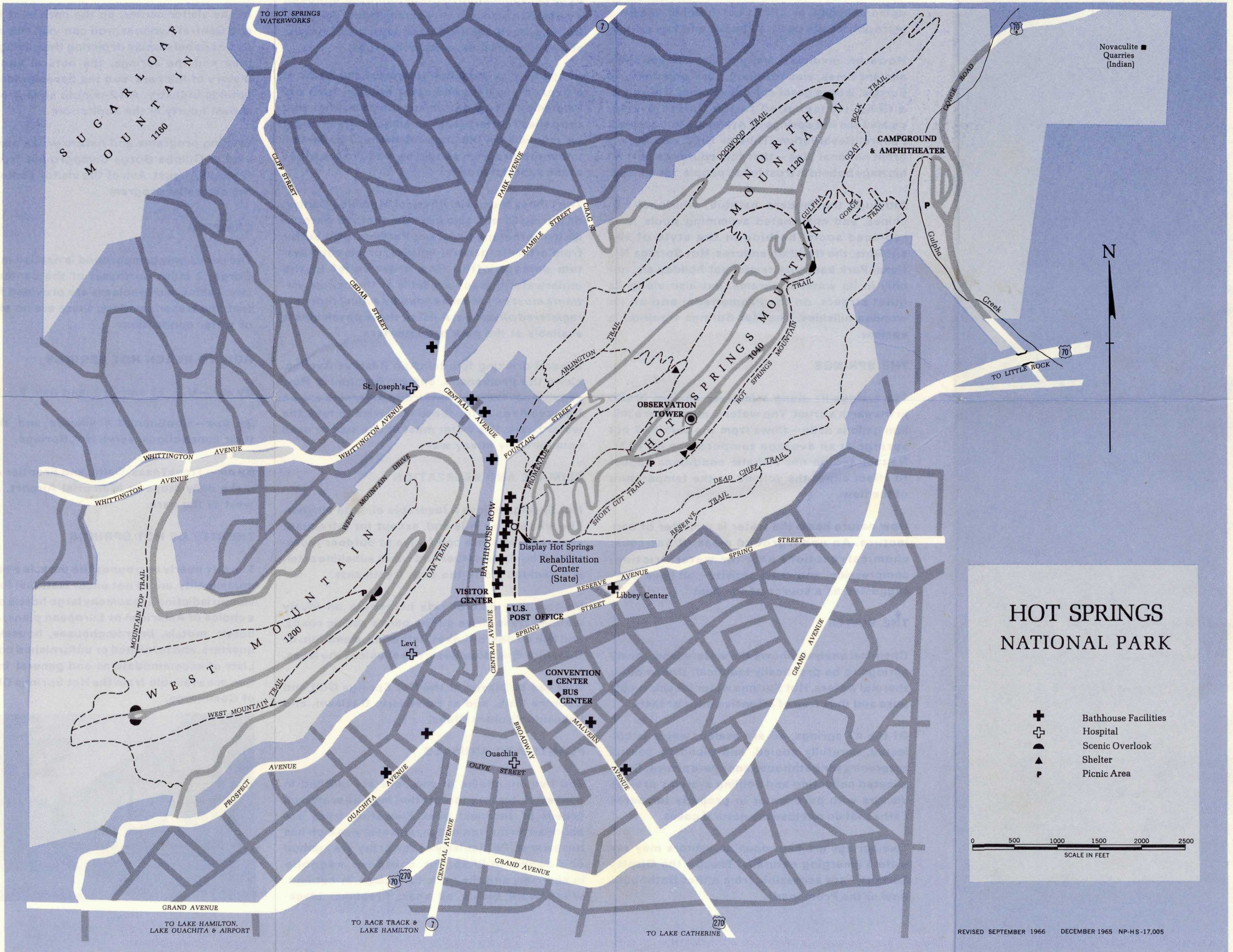
Advertising is not permitted within the park.

Horses have the right-of-way at all times and must be given the inside of trails when they so desire. Please be careful not to frighten them.

Commercial vehicles are prohibited from using park roads, except those operated under special-use permits or in connection with park operation.

Camping. Campers must first register at the campground office. Camping is permitted in designated sites only. In summer there is a 14 day limit; the rest of the year, 30 days.

Automobiles and motorcycles. Park roads are mountain roads; drive carefully at all times. Muffler cutouts must always be closed. Speed limit in the campground area is 15 m.p.h.



HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK

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- Bathhouse Facilities
Hospital
Scenic Overlook
Shelter
Picnic Area

