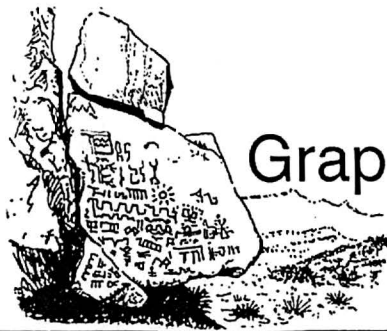


LAKE MEAD

National Recreation Area



National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior



Grapevine Canyon -- A Desert Oasis

A Unique Experience

To many first time visitors to the Mohave Desert, the area seems barren and desolate, but a walk through Grapevine Canyon will quickly change this impression. Here, a fresh water spring is present in most years. This fresh water in the heart of the desert provides life to a wide assortment of plants and animals. Pre-historic Indians also visited Grapevine Canyon hundreds of years ago, and left cryptic messages etched on the rocks in the form of petroglyphs. Evidence of modern man can be found too. Small "test holes" tell us that the prospectors and miners of the 1800's were in this area. Cement watering troughs point to the possibility that cattle were also here.

The entrance to this special place begins at the west end of the parking area. It follows a desert wash for several hundred feet to the mouth of the canyon. The walk into the canyon is fairly moderate with a few large boulders that will have to be maneuvered. **WARNING:** Before beginning your walk be sure to have plenty of drinking water. There is none available along the trail. Be prepared for summertime temperatures as high as 120 degrees.

Canyon Secrets

The route takes you up a wash that empties out of the canyon ahead. This area is alive with possibilities for human survival. Perhaps Indians gathered food in this wash. Look around. What do you see that might be edible? The numerous bushes with thorns, short and curved like a cat's claw easily identify Catclaw Acacia (*Acacia greggi*) growing along the wash. This member of the Pea Family produces a seed pod that was gathered and prepared for food by the Indians. The seeds were ground into meal and eaten as mush or cakes. Look for any other plants the Indians might have used.

The wash begins to narrow as you approach the canyon's mouth. Stop and look carefully at the cliffs. Early Indian tribes left messages, called petroglyphs, carved in the rock. These rock carvings may possibly relate the story of what happened in this area many centuries ago. As you look at the petroglyphs, try to read their hidden stories. What do the petroglyphs mean? Who carved them? Many modern archeologists believe that the carvings are just "doodlings." Others suggest that they might have ceremonial or religious purposes, or be offerings to the gods to secure a good hunt.

Determining the exact date of the petroglyphs is difficult. It is believed the rock art spans several unrelated time periods from about 150-200 years ago to 800 years ago. Some of the drawings are so faint they can hardly be seen. It is evident that the natural processes of wind, water, and erosion have weathered the drawings over the past several hundred years. If you look closely, you can also tell where modern man has vandalized this ancient rock art in recent times. These prehistoric drawings cannot be replaced. You can help the National Park Service protect these petroglyphs by not disturbing them in any way.

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Not far up the canyon from the petroglyphs an unexpected surprise is encountered: a plant with broad grape-like leaves and woody vines is growing on the canyon floor. Yes, it is wild grape. The origin is unknown, but its presence has long given the Canyon its name.

Continuing up the canyon, another surprise may await. If there has been enough rain (in season), you may encounter some small waterfalls. Is this the desert? Birdlife also becomes more abundant as well. Watch for Red-tailed hawks, Golden eagles, Gambel's quail, and Cactus wrens to name just a few.

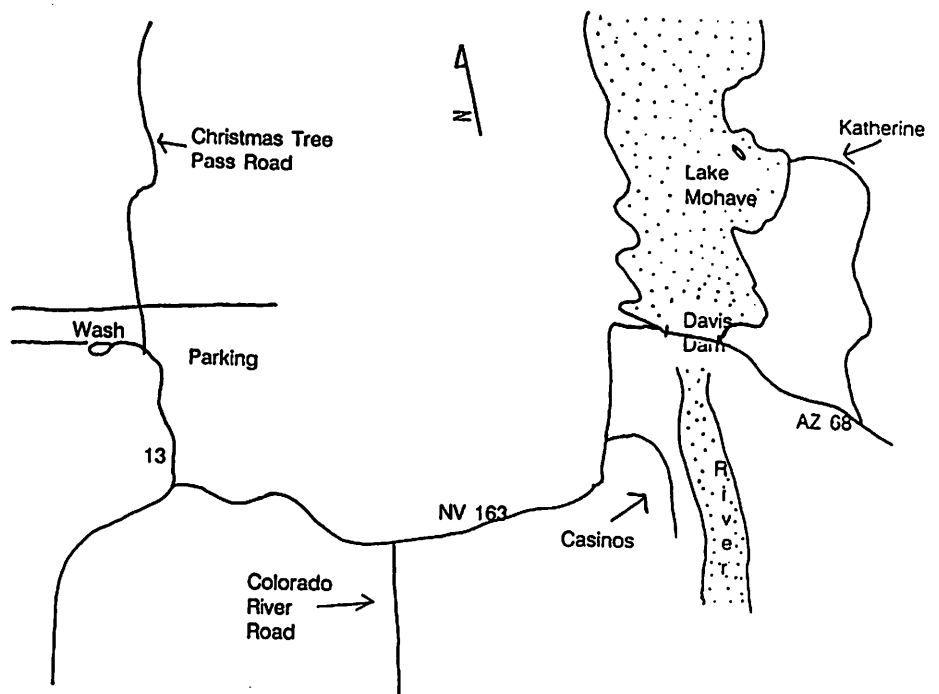
Up ahead is a large rock outcropping. This is a good spot to sit and reflect over your journey so far. If you rest quietly, the desert life will go back to its daily routine. Watch closely--you might see a mountain lion, bobcat, desert bighorn sheep, chuckwalla, horned lizard, dragonflies, or even a rattlesnake.

Looking at your watch you find it's been an hour or more since beginning your journey. Perhaps you hesitate a while longer before your start back down the canyon. Do you agree this is a special place?

How To Get There

Grapevine Canyon is accessible from the Christmas Tree Pass Road off Highway 163 about six miles west of Davis Dam. Just head back up the Katherine access road and make a right turn on Arizona 68. Go across Davis Dam and head up Nevada 163 until you find milepost marker 13, turn right onto a dirt road. A short spur road to the left will be spotted about two miles from the paved highway. Turn there to reach the parking area for Grapevine Canyon.

Map To Christmas Tree Pass



WE NEED YOUR HELP

The rock art at Grapevine Canyon and in other locations in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area is being vandalized and removed. It is a Federal Violation to damage or remove Indian artifacts from federal land. If you see anyone defacing a petroglyph, please report it to a National Park Service Ranger.

(602) 754-3272

(702) 754-8932 24 hr telephone

YOUR HELP WILL ENSURE THAT THESE ROCK DRAWINGS ARE PRESERVED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO ENJOY.