

BE PREPARED

The wise outdoor person is always prepared for adverse conditions when venturing away from the roads. An easy day trip can turn into a miserable experience if you don't have the equipment to stay dry, warm and safe. The list of items below should be considered the basics to be carried on a day trip. Consult a Ranger or another experienced person about those items necessary to make a longer snow camping trip a pleasant one.

PERSONAL ITEMS:

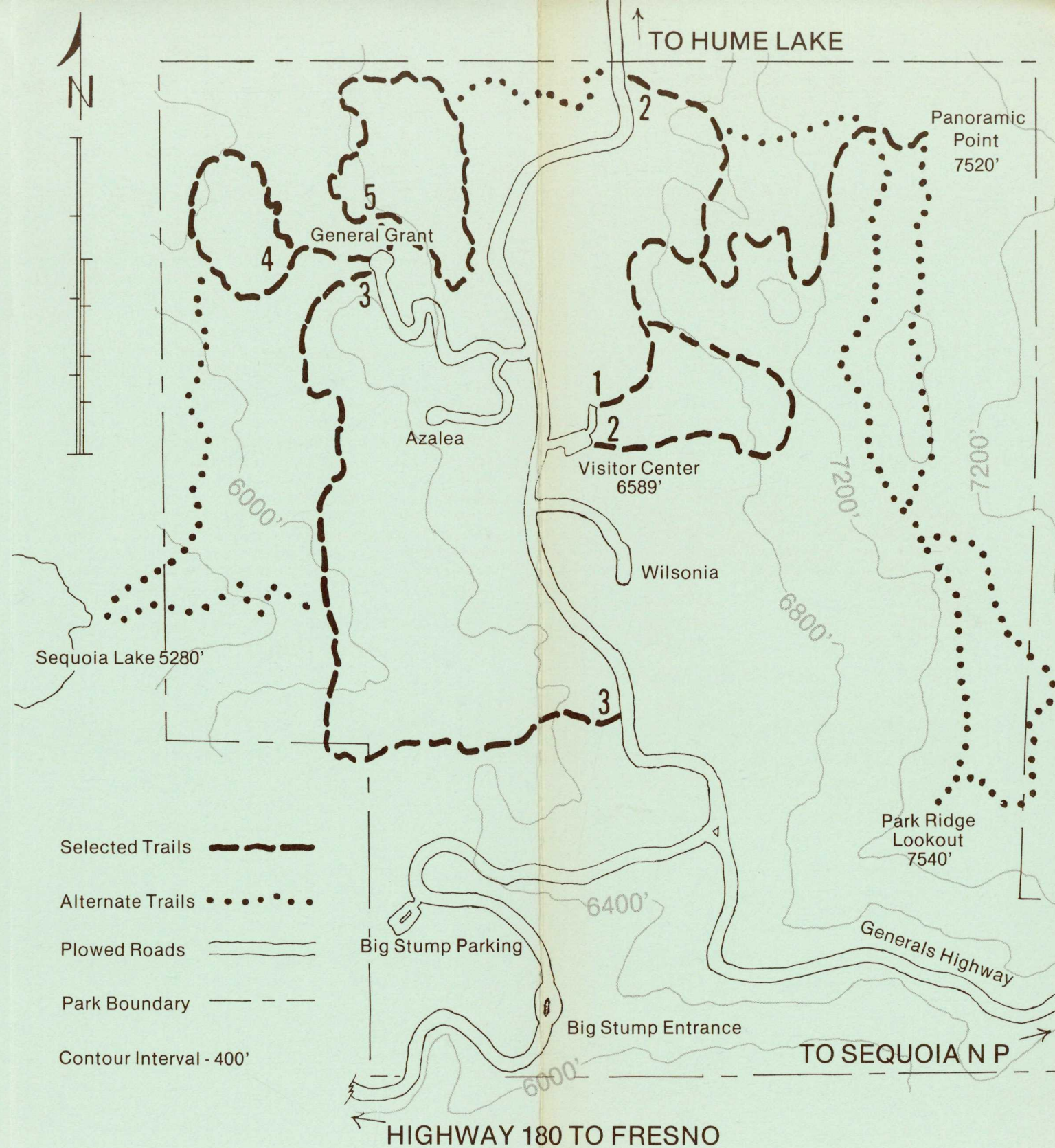
- Skis or snowshoes and poles
- Daypack or belt pack
- Pants, shirt, sweater, hat, mittens, and socks preferably of wool which stays warm when wet
- Gaiters
- Rain or storm shell, eg. cagoule
- Sun glasses and sun cream
- Water bottle
- Lunch and emergency food
- Pocket knife
- Candle and waterproof matches
- Toilet tissue

COMMUNITY ITEMS:

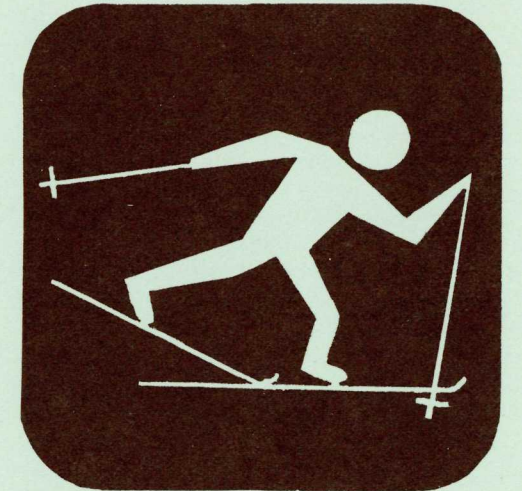
- Map and compass
- Spare ski tip and pole basket
- Flashlight, first aid kit, & space blanket
- Wax kit for waxable skis
- Repair kit:
 - Screwdriver, pliers, 5-minute epoxy, wire, nylon cord, strapping tape, & wood screws
- Note: parties traveling over terrain with avalanche potential should carry a snow shovel and avalanche cord or beacons

OPTIONAL ITEMS:

- Extra clothing
- Camera
- Binoculars
- Notebook and pen
- Stove and pot to heat water for soup or tea
- Foam pad to keep you off the snow while resting



WINTER TRAILS OF GRANT GROVE



KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK

WINTER TRAILS OF GRANT GROVE

John Muir called the Sierra Nevada a "gentle wilderness." Though storms can be fierce and relentless for the unsuspecting and ill-prepared, the climate is relatively mild. After the crowds of summer have gone and the snows of winter descend, a restful peace pervades the snowclad woods. What better way to appreciate the solitude or become familiar with the winter woods than on snowshoes or cross-country skis?

Check with a Ranger at the Grant Grove or Lodgepole Visitor Centers for the latest weather and snow condition report. Then get your gear together, fasten those long, funny gadgets to your feet, and find out what the quiet, forest trails have to offer.

Watch for signs of wildlife. What birds and animals can you see, or see signs of? How do these creatures survive winter in snowy places like this? Observe the many different trees and shrubs along the trail. Can you identify them in the winter when many have shed their leaves? How do woody plants survive winter nights with temperatures well below freezing?

For man, being mentally prepared for the possibility of having to spend a night out in the woods is half the battle for survival. Are you equipped to survive a winter night in the woods? Don't forget that conditions can change rapidly. A perfectly clear day can deteriorate to blizzard conditions in a few short hours. Likewise, snow conditions will vary from morning to afternoon, often dramatically.

Newcomers to winter backcountry travel will find it wise to practice their skills on gentle trails and level meadows before attempting the steeper trails and heading off into the back-country. You may want to rent equipment for your first few outings. Cross-country equipment as well as other winter supplies are available for rent and/or purchase at the Ski Tour Center in the Giant Forest and at Wilsonia Lodge in Grant Grove. Books, maps, wilderness permits and information are available at the Visitor Centers on all aspects of winter outdoor activities.

This pamphlet describes the major marked winter trails in the Grant Grove section of Kings Canyon National Park. These trails are marked with yellow or reddish-orange metal triangles, the point of which indicates the direction the trail takes. Trailheads are marked with the international symbol for cross-country skiing. Underneath this symbol is a triangle with a number, which corresponds to the trail numbers on this pamphlet. There are numerous other marked trails (alternate routes on the map) in the Grant Grove area; you may vary your route as you choose. Enjoy!

PANORAMIC POINT TRAIL 1

Round trip 5 miles, 8 kilometers
Moderate difficulty

One of the most popular winter trails in the area, this trail follows the unplowed road from the village to the top of Park Ridge. You gain about a thousand feet in elevation in 2½ miles to a spectacular view of the snow glazed mountains of Kings Canyon National Park. Although the road rises gradually, much use, along with freezing and thawing weather, can make this trail icy and treacherous.

Round Meadow, about half way to the top, offers an enjoyable stop for lunch and wide open, gentle slopes to practice a few turns. Watch for changes in the forest type from white fir to red fir as you ascend to the ridge top.

Pine Martin and Chickaree tracks are frequently seen along this trail. Can you distinguish them as you pause for a breather? In the sequoia groves, the exuberant little Chickaree finds an abundance of green cones on the tree all winter. What do you suppose they find to feed on up here?

CEDAR SPRINGS - NORTH BOUNDARY TRAIL 2

Round trip 4 miles, 6.4 kilometers
Moderate difficulty

This trail begins at the east end of the Visitor Center parking area, and offers skiers some challenges. The trail heads eastward up hill for about a half mile, then swings downhill to the left along the Cedar Springs Trail until it meets the Panoramic Point Trail. It follows the latter trail for about a third of a mile, then swings off to the north along a bridle path to the north boundary and down to the main highway. Here, you may retrace your route, or take an alternate route crossing the highway and following the markers downhill to the Bridle Trail Loop (#5).

It is neither wise nor safe to walk or ski on park roads in winter. If you feel that you cannot retrace your route, ski back to the village on the snow berm well above the roadway.

Numerous incense cedars can be found along this trail, hence the name Cedar Springs. But don't look for a tree that smells like a cedar chest. Can you distinguish these trees from young sequoias? Many folks cannot! Carefully observe the bark and foliage; what differences exist?

SWALE - SOUTH BOUNDARY TRAIL 3

One-way trip 3.5 miles, 5.6 kilometers
Easy trail

Like all trails in the Grant Grove area, this trail has its ups and downs. However, the grade of the Swale - South Boundary Trail is probably the most gradual of any. It also offers a diversity of scenery, from great sequoia groves to pine forests and small creeks. Although you may start from either end of this trail, it is easiest to begin at the southwest corner of the Grant Tree parking area. Follow the unplowed road through Swale Campground and along an old fire road to the former southern boundary of the Grant Grove area. From Sequoia Creek, follow the markers uphill to the main road. At this point, either retrace your route, or continue above the roadway back through the village area and down to the Grant Tree Park Area.

About 1½ miles from the Grant Tree Parking Area, an observant person will find the junction of the hiking trail coming from Sunset Campground and continuing to Sequoia Lake. Off to your right you will see power lines following a low ridge. An unmarked side trip 300 yards along the ridge will afford a fine view of Sequoia Lake, and on a clear day the San Joaquin Valley.

NORTH GROVE LOOP TRAIL 4

Round trip 1.5 miles, 2.4 kilometers
Easy trail

The shortest of our marked trails, the North Grove Loop, follows an old one-way road through a beautiful grove of giant sequoias. Beginning skiers will find it easier to follow this loop trail clockwise, to avoid some of the sharper downhill curves in the road. Starting at the lower end of the Grant Tree Parking Area, follow the trail markers downhill along the road to the second junction on your right. Take this trail downhill to the large dead sequoia, then uphill to the old road grade returning to the parking lot.

Take a close look at the dead sequoia. It is badly charred, apparently killed by fire. This is rare for a sequoia since they are highly resistant to fire. How could it be determined when this fire occurred? What conditions might cause this charred giant to topple?

BRIDLE TRAIL LOOP 5

Round trip 3 miles, 4.8 kilometers
Moderate difficulty

This trail starts from near the base of the General Grant Tree and follows the summer equestrian trail. Follow the trail from the parking area past the Grant Tree and historic Gamlin Cabin to the junction of the bridle trail. From here one can go either direction, following the trail markers around the loop and back to this point. We suggest going to the right uphill first. The trail skirts the Grant Grove of giant sequoia and the access road to the trees, then turns northward past the stables to the northern boundary of Grant Grove.

You will notice a wider open area along the boundary where a fire break was cut between the National Park. This was done when the Grant Tree and surrounding forest were threatened by the McGee fire in 1955. Obviously, the fire did not reach this location, but if you travel north on the main highway, you will come to an open area where the forest was totally destroyed. The fire scars that you find on the sequoias were from many much smaller fires. Fire is a vital part of the natural life cycle of the giant sequoias, and the National Park Service is now using it as a management tool to help preserve these great trees for future generations to enjoy.

The trail generally follows the Park boundary westward, then loops back to the Giant Grove area. There are numerous places where this trail wanders up, down and along hillsides. Be careful and use caution on these traverses.

SEQUOIA Natural History Association
in cooperation with the
National Park Service

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