



## Interesting Facts About the World's Largest Gypsum Dunefield



- Size of the Tularosa Basin: 6500 square miles.
- Size of White Sands National Monument: 224 square miles (143,733 acres).
- Size of the gypsum dunefield in the basin:
  - 60% of the dunefield is on White Sands Missile Range
  - 176,000 acres (275 square miles)
  - 10 x 30 miles
- Percentage of dunefield within the monument:
  - 41% of the entire dunefield
  - 115 square miles
  - 73,600 acres
- The dunefield has about 4.5 billion tons of gypsum sand, which is enough to fill 45 million box cars—a train long enough to circle the earth at the equator over 25 times! The dunefield is so large that it can be seen from space.
- Chemical composition of gypsum: calcium sulphate and water ( $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ).
- The dunefield is less than 10,000 years old.
- Depth of gypsum sand across the entire field is 30 feet below interdunal surface.
- The highest dunes are approximately 60 feet high.
- Highest point in the monument is 4116' at NE 30, which is a former military installation.
- Lowest point in the monument is 3887' at Lake Lucero.
- When filled with water, Lake Lucero covers approximately 10 square miles at a depth of 2 or 3 feet.
- Mammoth footprints on the Alkali Flat were discovered as early as 1932.
- The Monument was established by presidential proclamation (Herbert Hoover) in January 1933.
- The first superintendent was Tom Charles. He actively promoted the creation of the park and served as superintendent from 1934 to 1939.
- The adobe visitor center and adjacent historic structures were completed in 1938 by the WPA and CCC.
- Over 300 plants, 250 birds, 50 mammals, 30 reptiles, 7 amphibians, and 1 fish species call White Sands National Monument their home.
- White animal species found at White Sands include 3 reptiles, 1 amphibian, 3 mammals, and numerous insects.
- Five species are endemic, meaning they are only found here at White Sands and not anywhere else on earth: Apache pocket mouse, White Sands wood rat, bleached earless lizard, and two camel crickets.