

Lake Mead

NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
ARIZONA • NEVADA

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THE LAKE MEAD COUNTRY

Vast expanses of clear fresh water, stark and colorful desert landscapes, clean air, and ideal climate make this national recreation area a welcome spot in our polluted, crowded, jet-age world.

Lake Mead stretches 115 miles up the old course of the Colorado River from Hoover Dam to Grand Canyon. Its 550-mile shoreline, consisting of wide sandy beaches, shadowed coves, and steep canyon walls, provides endless opportunities for swimming, diving, fishing, boating, water skiing, and beach camping.

Lake Mohave, a narrow reservoir formed by Davis Dam, reaches northward 67 miles to the base of Hoover Dam. Besides the various water sports, visitors also observe and photograph interesting geological formations, ancient Indian petroglyphs, and bighorn sheep along the shores of Lake Mohave.

The rugged desert landscape surrounding the lakes ranges in elevation from 517 feet above sea level below Davis Dam to 6,990 feet on the Shivwits Plateau. Here you can enjoy hiking, climbing, rock-hounding, hunting, and photography.

But this vast area offers much more than just physical recreation. Perhaps even more significant are its lessons about the formation of the earth's surface, the natural laws that govern biological

communities, the influence of man on this environment, and in turn its influence on man.

The park lies astride the Grand Wash Cliffs which form the abrupt and spectacular transition between two major geographical provinces of North America. To the east, the Colorado River has carved a series of canyons through the high province known as the Colorado Plateau. The grandest of these is the Grand Canyon, where erosion has exposed thousands of feet of nearly horizontal layers of limestones, shales, and sandstones.

Soon after emerging from the western portal of the Grand Canyon, at the Grand Wash Cliffs, the north-south trending mountains of the Basin and Range Province divert the Colorado River southward toward the Gulf of California. Broad enclosed valleys, without external drainage, separate the many mountain ranges of this vast province.

But in the Lake Mead section, the erosive power of the Colorado River breached the mountain barriers, thus providing the local basins with drainage to the south. These broad basins with their sheer connecting canyons provided an ideal setting for Hoover and Davis Dams.

The rock formations exposed in the Lake Mead Country span nearly the full range of geologic history and are related to those exposed in Zion, Grand Canyon, and Petrified Forest National Parks. Marine and freshwater sediments as well as volcanic rocks are well represented. Faulting, folding, and erosion are beautifully displayed.



The kit fox makes its home on the desert where it preys upon rodents.

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITIES

Biologists recognize four major communities of plants and animals in the park, which lies within the northeast corner of the Mohave Desert.

The Desert Shrub Community is the most widespread of the four biological communities, covering all valley floors and gravel slopes up to about 6,000 feet above sea level. Common plants include creosotebush, Mohave yucca, Joshua-tree, and a variety of cactuses. Animals of this arid community include kit fox, kangaroo rats, desert bighorn sheep, and a variety of reptiles and birds.

The Woodland Community lies generally above 6,000 feet and is limited in the park to the Shivwits Plateau and the Newberry Mountains around Christmas Tree Pass. Utah juniper, Colorado pinyon, Gambel oak, and sagebrush characterize this community. Common animals include Utah rock squirrel, cliff chipmunk, mourning dove, and a few reptiles. Mule deer abound on the Shivwits Plateau.

The Transzonal Community occupies the drainages and canyons which dissect the terrain at all elevations and thus occurs as a mosaic within and between the other communities. Honey mesquite, saltbush, and desertwillow thrive on the moisture



Two of the plants of the Desert Shrub Community are the Joshua-tree (left) and the desert primrose.

beneath the gravelly wash bottoms. The animals of this community are those generally found in the surrounding communities.

The Shoreline and Aquatic Community includes those plants and animals living in, or associated with, permanent springs, streams, and lakes. Fremont cottonwood, willow, and cattail thrive along these waters. The artificial Lake Mead and Mohave, which comprise most of this community, are populated with species exotic to this desert region. Various ducks, gulls, and grebes feed on the surface, while largemouth black bass, rainbow trout, and black crappie cruise along the submerged cliffs searching for aquatic insects.

MAN IN THE LAKE MEAD COUNTRY

The area's human history extends back to man's arrival in the Southwest more than 10,000 years ago. The people of the archaic Desert Culture were highly successful at adapting to one of the most rigorous climatic regions in America. This culture endured into historic times here through the Paiute. Trading and agricultural societies evolved along the stream courses of the region. This area became the western frontier of the great Pueblo Culture until about A.D. 1150. Most significant archeological sites, including the Lost City Pueblo and the Virgin River Salt Quarries, were inundated by the reservoirs.

The recorded history of the area began in 1826, when Jedediah Smith passed through on his first Southwest Expedition in search of beaver. The long list of early explorers here includes John C. Fremont, Lt. Edward Beale, Lt. Joseph C. Ives, and Maj. John Wesley Powell.

The period of exploration was followed by colonization and exploitation. Mormon farm settlements and roaring mining camps sprang up along the rivers and in the mountains, and a riverboat transportation system soon developed on the Colorado River. Stern-wheeled steamboats up to 175 feet in length and with gross tonnages in excess of 200 tons negotiated the sand bars and the rapids of the mighty Colorado up to the Mormon river port of Callville and even up to Rioville at the mouth of the Virgin River.

The history of man in the region reached a dramatic point in 1935 when Hoover Dam was completed and Lake Mead was formed, covering such historic sites as Callville, Rioville, and St. Thomas.

The filling of Lakes Mead and Mohave drastically altered the natural desert environment and at the same time created an outstanding water recreational resource. Where our pioneering forefathers struggled to survive the dangers of the desert and of the mighty Colorado River, we now play, relax, and enjoy the brilliant sunshine which was such a torture to them.

This etching of three bighorn was done long ago, probably by chipping the rock's weathered surface with a stone. In some places in the recreation area, the Indian petroglyphs show a variety of shapes. Whether they were done for pure artistic pleasure or with a message in mind is not known.

WHAT TO SEE AND DO

The park is open all year. Even during July and August, when daylight temperatures may rise above 110°, the heat is not oppressive because of low humidity. Nights are usually comfortable. From late September through December, and from early February through late May, the weather is delightful.

For protection against the brilliant desert sunshine, wear a hat and tinted glasses.

Winter temperatures are sometimes rather low, particularly in the mornings and evenings, so be prepared with warm clothing.



The egret feeds on small fish and frogs in the shallow waters at the lake edge.

Ranger Programs. Park rangers present illustrated programs in the evenings. Subjects include the park's recreational opportunities, history, geology, and biology. Schedules, which vary seasonally, are posted at campgrounds and ranger stations. Developed centers around the lakes also have exhibits.

The Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, a nonprofit organization, has sales outlets for publications and maps at park headquarters in Boulder City, at the Boulder Beach Visitor Center, and in the ranger information stations.

Fishing. A Nevada or Arizona fishing license is required; a stamp from the other state must be affixed to it if you fish from a boat.

Swimming. Both lakes are ideal for swimming many months of the year, but the waters of the upper section of Lake Mohave are extremely cold. Public swimming beaches, open in summer at Boulder Beach and Katherine, have diving floats, safety lines, and lifeguards. Be especially careful when swimming elsewhere. Never swim alone or from an unanchored boat.

Boating and water-skiing. Launching ramps are provided at each developed area on both lakes. Always check the weather forecast before boating.

Boats, motors, and water-skiing equipment can be rented or purchased from some concessioners. Discuss charges for mooring sites with the concessioner concerned. Sanitary dump stations are located at major harbors. Dumping in the lakes is prohibited.

Cruises on Lake Mead. Boat trips to various locations are offered by concessioners. Ask about current rates and schedules.

Diving. Scuba-diving and skindiving are increasingly popular. Divers must stay away from swim beaches and boat harbors and should always fly the diver's flag.

Camping. Modern campgrounds with the basic necessities are located at each major developed site. Uplake beaches and back-country areas provide many opportunities for wilderness camping. Keep all campsites clean and sanitary. Carry out all solid wastes. Litter containers are provided at launch ramps and campgrounds.

Hiking. Exploring the park's mountains and canyons can be a very enjoyable and rewarding experience except in summer. Check with a park ranger about good places to hike. Always carry water and tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.

Motoring. Many miles of roads go through the bizarre desert scenery and fascinating communi-



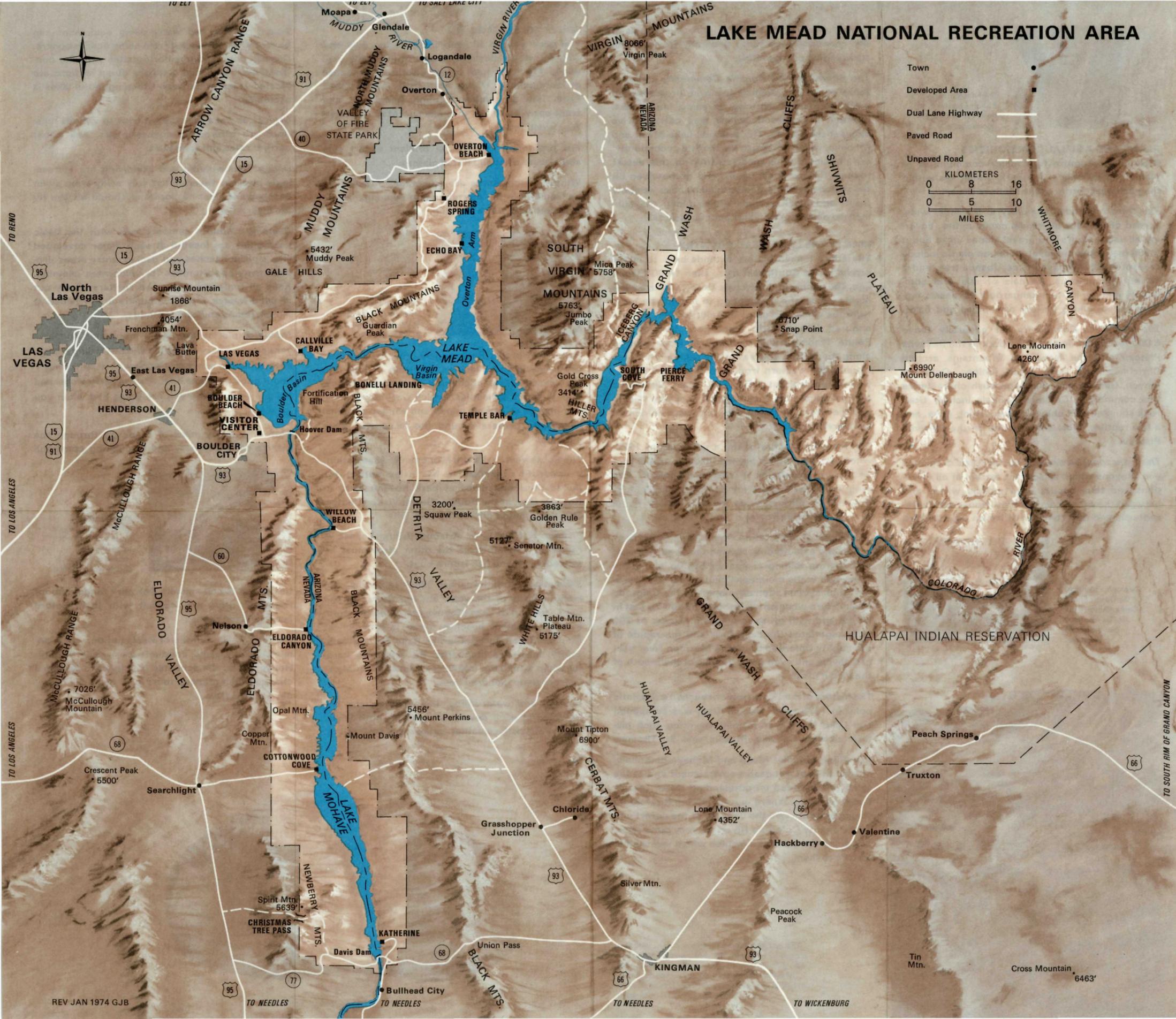
Many people are coming to appreciate the use of a natural force, the wind, instead of a gasoline engine when boating.

ties of plants and animals. Ask park rangers about routes to drive and consult with them before leaving paved roads.

Dam tours. The Bureau of Reclamation, which administers the dams, conducts tours daily through Hoover Dam; the schedule is subject to seasonal changes. Self-guiding tours can be taken every day at Davis Dam.



LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA



SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Developed area	Campground	Ranger station	Ranger on duty	Free facilities				Concession facilities			Miles from visitor center	
				Picnic shelter	Launching ramp	Swimming beach	Boat dock	Trailer court	Store	Lodging		Marine supplies
LAKE MEAD												
Boulder Beach	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Las Vegas Bay	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Callville Bay	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Echo Bay	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Rogers Spring	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Overton Beach	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Temple Bar	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
LAKE MOHAVE												
Willow Beach	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Eldorado Canyon	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cottonwood Cove	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Katherine	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

For detailed information on concession facilities, write to or telephone the following:

- Callville Bay Marina, L & M Enterprises, Inc., 2103 Western Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89102 702-565-8956
- Cottonwood Cove Development Co., P.O. Box 123, Searchlight, NV 89046 702-297-1233
- Echo Bay Resort, Inc., P.O. Box 384, Overton, NV 89040 702-397-2661
- Eldorado Canyon Resort, Inc., Star Route, Box 10-A, Searchlight, NV 89046 702-NELSON LANDING #31
- Lake Mead Ferry Service, Inc., 5441 Paradise Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89109 702-736-6180
- Lake Mead Lodge, P.O. Box 96, Boulder City, NV 89005 702-293-2074
- Lake Mead Marina, P.O. Box 96, Boulder City, NV 89005 702-293-3484
- Lake Mohave Resort, Inc., Bullhead City, AZ 86430 602-754-3245
- Lakeshore Trailer Court, Boulder City, NV 89005 702-293-2540
- Las Vegas Boat Harbor, Inc., P.O. Box 771, Henderson, NV 89015 702-565-9111
- Overton Beach Resort, Inc., P.O. Box 714, Overton, NV 89040 702-397-2569
- Temple Bar Marina, Inc., Temple Bar, AZ 86443 602-767-3400
- Willow Beach Resort, Inc., P.O. Box 187, Boulder City, NV 89005 602-767-3311

Telephone and telegraph services, churches, motels, cafes, garages, service stations, photographic and curio shops, and stores are also in Boulder City, Henderson, Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Searchlight, and Overton, Nev., and in Bullhead City and Kingman, Ariz.

TRANSPORTATION TO THE PARK
Railroads serve Kingman and Las Vegas. Buses from Las Vegas make regular runs to the recreation area and Hoover Dam.

The nearest commercial airport is at Las Vegas; airports accommodating private planes are at Boulder City and North Las Vegas. Additional landing strips are at Overton and Echo Bay in Nevada, and Temple Bar in Arizona. Mohave County Airport at Bullhead City, Ariz., serves Katherine.

Write to the superintendent of the recreation area about landing amphibian planes on Lake Mead and Lake Mohave.

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FOR YOUR SAFETY
You are entering a scenic area preserved in as natural a condition as possible. These inherent conditions can be hazardous to you. While every effort is made to provide for your safety and comfort, you must remain alert and exercise individual caution.

ADMINISTRATION
Lake Mead National Recreation Area, established on October 13, 1936, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is 601 Nevada Highway, Boulder City, NV 89005, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, park and recreation areas, and for the wise use of all those resources. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR