Living with Wildland Fire

Fire is a way of life in California and throughout the west. Its effects can be seen from the sagebrush to the red fir forests. With changing climate, California is experiencing warmer, drier winters and the possibility for large, damaging fires is increasing for a larger proportion of the year.

History of Fire
For thousands of years prior to the 20th century, fire shaped this landscape. Forests had fewer, yet larger, healthier trees, more widely spaced apart. In 1992, the Rainbow Fire burned hot and fast through the Reds Meadow Valley. The fire burned in areas where fire suppression had been in practice for years, leaving excessive fuel and dense stands of trees. The fire quickly threatened structures and human life and consumed all vegetation in its path.

The Rainbow Fire provided a good example of what can happen when fire is removed from an ecosystem for years and fuels are allowed to build up. The fire also provided an opportunity for managers to look at how to live with wildland fire and how to include fire in the management of public lands.

Are there Benefits of Wildland Fire?
Yes, and changes created by fire are important. Fire, when managed properly, creates habitat diversity, valuable homes for wildlife, and improves the health of ecosystems while also protecting human life and property. Fire plays a natural role in clearing limbs, dead leaves, needles, small trees and shrubs from the forest floor. Fire also helps manage insect populations that prey on trees. But fire can also be catastrophic and in some cases, extremely damaging to ecosystems, life and property.

Wildland Fire Management Today
Today’s forests are thinned and cleared and low-lying vegetation is removed by prescribed fire, mechanical thinning, and pile burning. This management strategy helps to decrease the potential of catastrophic fires and promote healthier forests. When people live in or near the wildland, careful planning and work is required to manage forests and protect the community. Reducing fuel is a critical component in protecting life, property and the ecological health of the forest.

Inside this guide, you will find valuable information on what you can do during your visit to help protect your public lands from human caused fire.

Be a part of the solution this summer and help eliminate human-caused wildland fire.

The monument is updating the existing Fire and Fuels Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. The purpose of the update is to expand fire and fuels management, respond to declining forest health, protect natural and cultural resources, and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire. The draft will be open for public comment in July. Check the website for updates.

www.parkplanning.nps.gov/depo

Trail to the Base of Rainbow Falls
The trail to the base of Rainbow Falls is temporarily closed in order to complete needed trail work on the popular route to the base of the waterfall. The trail to the top of Rainbow Falls remains open, and visitors have access to the two viewpoints of the waterfall.

The temporary closure of the trail is necessary for park crews to complete much needed trail maintenance and to mitigate rockfall hazards. The closure is expected to last throughout the season.

Trail work is being completed by Devils Postpile National Monument staff with assistance from a local conservation trail crew.

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Shuttle Bus and Fee Information

The bus is mandatory for most visitors. See the chart below for prices. Tickets can be purchased at the Adventure Center, located at the main gondola building at Mammoth Mountain.

Purchasing the shuttle bus is along the roadside near Mammoth Mountain Main Lodge. Leashed and muzzled dogs are welcome on buses. Please be careful walking along the roadside from the parking areas to the Adventure Center to purchase bus tickets.

The trip into the valley takes about 30 minutes. Be prepared for a variety of conditions. Hiking shoes, sunscreen, water, and food are recommended.

If you are one of the following, you qualify as an exception to the bus system and will be allowed to drive into the valley, and must pay a fee at the Minaret Vista Station.

- Visitors displaying a disabled persons parking placard or plate
- Visitors with an inflated float tube or non-motorized vessel for use on valley lakes
- Visitors staying in a designated campground in the valley (backpackers must use the shuttle)
- Visitors towing livestock trailers
- Overnight guests of Reds Meadow Resort
- Visitors entering the valley when the bus is not running
- Hunters transporting weapons or game

Fees for exception vehicles:

- One Day Pass: $10/vehicle
- Three-day pass: $20/vehicle (Good for three of five consecutive days)
- Campers: $10/vehicle for the duration of stay.
- Season pass: $35/vehicle.

Three-day and season passes for exception vehicles are accepted at Mono Lake South Tufa and Schullman Grove Day Use Areas.

Interagency Annual, Military, Senior, and Access Passes are only accepted for vehicles that are exceptions to the shuttle bus. Interagency passes are not valid for shuttle bus tickets.

Schedule

From the Village at Mammoth:

- 7:15 a.m.
- 8:00 a.m.
- 8:45 a.m.
- 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. every 30 min.

From 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., visitors will board the Mammoth Mountain Bike Park Shuttle to get to the Adventure Center (free for hikers).

From the Mammoth Mountain Adventure Center:

- 7:30 a.m.–9:45 a.m. every 45 min.
- 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. every 20 min.
- 5:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m. every 30–45 min.

The Need for a Shuttle System

The shuttle has allowed the valley to recover from intense use that occurred throughout the 1970’s. It has protected the area from degradation caused by high visitation and limited parking. Whether riding the shuttle or driving into the valley in an exception vehicle, everyone enjoys a safer experience as a result of the shuttle operation.

Shuttle Bus Passes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PASSES</th>
<th>COST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day Pass</td>
<td>$8 per adult, $4 per child (aged 3-15), children 2 and under are free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilderness Hikers</td>
<td>$8 per adult, $4 per child (aged 3-15), children 2 and under are free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-Day Pass</td>
<td>$16 per adult, $8 per child (aged 3-15), children 2 and under are free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season Pass</td>
<td>$40 per adult, $20 per child (aged 3-15), children 2 and under are free.</td>
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</table>
Information and Services

**EMERGENCIES**
In an emergency, dial 911. Cell phone coverage is limited. Pay phones are located at Devils Postpile, Reds Meadow Resort and Pumice Flat campground.

**VISITOR CENTERS**

**Devis Postpile**
The Devils Postpile Ranger Station is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from late-June through Labor Day. It will be open in September and October as staffing permits. Maps and other information is available. There is also a bookstore on site.

**Inyo National Forest**
The Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center serves the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the Inyo National Forest, and the National Park Service year-round. A bookstore and permits are available. Hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily (760-924-5505).

**CAMPING**

**Devis Postpile**
The Devils Postpile National Monument Campground will be closed for the 2018 season. The purpose is to accommodate an increase in day use visitation and to provide better services to the highest number of visitors.

**Inyo National Forest**
There are seven Forest Service campgrounds in Reds Meadow Valley. Five campgrounds are first-come, first-served. Current fees for all Inyo campgrounds (including group and horse) can be found on the Inyo National Forest Website or by calling 760-924-5500. Two group campgrounds are available by reservation. Agnew Campground has three equestrian campsites and are also by reservation only.

**Special Campground Information**
At the time of printing, exact opening dates for campgrounds in the Reds Meadow Valley were unknown. Please call ahead to ensure that the campground in which you wish to stay will be open. The Inyo National Forest is working to open these sites as soon as possible. Please call ahead for the most current information.

**Campground Closing Dates**
All campgrounds in the Reds Meadow Valley close on or before October 15, depending on weather. Call ahead for exact dates. Typically, campgrounds are open through the Labor Day weekend and some stay open into early October. There is no overnight parking in the valley after October 14.

**SHOWERS**
The Reds Meadow hot spring fed showers will not open this season. The tub will be locked for safety reasons. Showers will be available at the Reds Meadow Resort and Packstation. Showers are $7.00. Towels are available for $1.00.

**FOOD SERVICES**
Food service is available at the Reds Meadow Resort. A store and a restaurant are open from June through September. Camping supplies and groceries are also available.

**PETS**

**Devis Postpile**
Pets are allowed on trails in and in the campground at the monument and must be on a leash at all times.

**Inyo National Forest**
Pets are allowed on trails in the Inyo National Forest as long as they are on leash or under voice control, and near the owner. Pets must be on leash in all National Forest campgrounds and developed sites including parking lots, trailheads, and day use areas.

On the Shuttle Bus
Leashed and muzzled pets are permitted on the shuttle buses. Muzzles can be purchased at pet stores in Mammoth Lakes or at the Mammoth Mountain Adventure Center.

**FISHING**
A fishing license is required for adults ages 16 and older. Regulations can be found in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Freshwater Sport Fishing Book available online or where fishing licenses are sold.

**HUNTING AND FIREARMS**

**Devis Postpile**
Hunting is prohibited within the boundaries of the monument.

Inyo National Forest
Hunting is permitted in designated areas within the Inyo National Forest with a valid license. Contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife at 559-243-4005 ext. 151 for more information. Regulation booklets are available at the Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center.

Firearms Regulations
Federal law allows people who can legally possess firearms under applicable federal, state, and local laws, to legally possess firearms in Devils Postpile National Monument and on the Inyo National Forest. It is the responsibility of visitors to understand and comply with all applicable state, local, and federal firearms laws before entering the monument or forest. For information on California regulations, visit: http://ag.ca.gov/firearms/.

**STOCK USE**

**Devis Postpile**
Stock are allowed on monument trails with the exception of the Devils Postpile Trail and a short section of trail near Rainbow Falls. Ask for a detailed map at the Ranger Station.

Stock should enter the monument via the Rainbow Falls Trailhead. Parking and maneuvering in valley parking lots can be very challenging for large vehicles and trailers. Please use caution on the narrow Reds Meadow Road and in parking lots.

Off-trail stock use is prohibited. River crossing is only permitted at the designated stock bridge located in on the John Muir/Pacific Crest Trails within the monument. The Soda Springs Bridge is not designed for stock use. Grazing is prohibited and weed free feed is recommended.

**Inyo National Forest**
Stock are allowed on most National Forest trails. Several trailheads are suitable for stock loading and unloading including Agnew Meadows and Rainbow Falls.

Group size is limited to 15 people and 25 stock. Stock must be kept 200 feet from all lake shores. Pellets, cubes, or grain must be used where feed is limited or grazing is not allowed. Weed free feed is recommended. Remove excess pellets or cubes and remove or scatter manure.

Use hitchlines or hobbles to constrain stock in backcountry campsites. Highlines are preferred in many areas to reduce impacts. Camps must be set up 200 feet from water or any trails.

Watering of stock should be done away from marshy areas, ponds, lakes, and other places susceptible to bank erosion. Established fords or low, rocky spots in the bank should be used.

**Length Limits on the Postpile Road**
To decrease risks and provide for the safety of all visitors traveling on the narrow road accessing Devils Postpile National Monument, Devils Postpile has restricted the length of vehicles on the section of road in the monument to 25 feet. This does not apply to the entire road. This only applies to the short section of road that spurs off the Reds Meadow Road and enters the national monument.

Commercial vehicles longer than 25 feet should contact Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (www.estransit.com) for information on entrance into Devils Postpile.

Recreational vehicles longer than 25 feet are advised to use Forest Service campgrounds that will accommodate 25 foot vehicles and utilize the Reds Meadow Shuttle bus if visiting Devils Postpile. The shuttle bus is free between Agnew Meadows and Reds Meadow Resort.

Groups eligible for an educational fee waiver traveling in buses longer than 25 feet should contact Devils Postpile National Monument for information pertaining to special use permits.

The road is narrow and visibility is limited. All vehicles should use caution on both the Reds Meadow and Devils Postpile roads.

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**Photo: NPS**
What to Do in the Area?

- Take a hike!
- Attend a Ranger Program.
- See Devils Postpile.
- Cast your line.

Note: The trip into the Reds Meadow Valley and to Devils Postpile takes visitors 1,500 feet downhill from the Minaret Vista.
Permits
Wilderness permits are required for overnight travel into the Ansel Adams Wilderness year round. Reservations may be made up to six months in advance for trips during the quota season which is May 1 through November 1. A $5 per person reservation fee plus a $6 per reservation transaction fee is charged at the time you reserve with www.recreation.gov. No fee is charged for walk-in permits.

Permits and maps are available at the Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center. For trips originating in the Inyo National Forest, call (760) 873-2483 or visit the Inyo National Forest website. For hikes starting in Sequoia, Kings Canyon or Yosemite National Parks, permits must be acquired through those parks and will be valid for the duration of your trip. For trips originating in Sequoia or Kings Canyon, please call (559) 565-3341 or visit www.nps.gov/seki. For trips originating in Yosemite call (209) 372-0826 (summer only) or visit www.nps.gov/yose.

Be Prepared
Weather in the mountains changes in an instant. Extreme temperatures, violent storms, and unexpected changes are not uncommon. Dress in layers and bring plenty of water on any hike. Do not drink water directly from streams or lakes without filtering or boiling it before consumption.

Sensitive Areas
Cross country travel is permitted in most areas, but please observe posted signs. Meadows like the ones found in the Reds Meadow Valley and alpine areas are sensitive and may take many years to recover from “social” or unofficial trails. If traveling off-trail, travel on durable surfaces such as rock or snow.

Backcountry Fires
Fires are allowed in some backcountry areas. It is your responsibility to know where fires are and are not allowed. Keep in mind that this information may change during severe fire seasons. Visit the Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center or Devils Postpile Ranger Station for the most current information.

Food Storage
Approved bear canisters are required in all backcountry areas.

Hiking trails:
- Lake Ediza: Easy to moderate, 1 mi / 1.6 km, shuttle stop 1
- Shadow Lake: Easy, 2 mi / 3.2 km, shuttle stop 1
- Wildflower Trail: Easy, 2 mi / 3.2 km, shuttle stop 1
- Devils Postpile: Easy, 3 mi / 4.8 km, shuttle stop 2
- Minaret Falls: Easy, 1.5 mi / 2.4 km, shuttle stop 3
- Rainbow Falls: Easy, 2.5 mi / 4 km, shuttle stop 3
- Minaret Lake: Easy, 8 mi / 12.9 km, shuttle stop 3
- Sotcher Lake Nature Trail: Easy, 2 mi / 3.2 km, shuttle stop 7
- Rainbow Falls: Easy, 1.3 mi / 2 km, shuttle stop 9
Want to learn more about Devils Postpile or the U.S. Forest Service? The Devils Postpile Junior Ranger and the National Junior Forest Ranger programs are great ways to do it. Activities for all ages are included in the booklets, available free of charge at the Devils Postpile Ranger Station or at the Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center.

Ever wondered if there's an online program? To become a National Park Service Web Ranger, visit www.nps.gov/webrangers.

These programs are open to any age.

To visit the Reds Meadow Valley and Devils Postpile National Monument, fourth grade students with plastic Interagency Fourth Grade Annual Pass can ride the Reds Meadow Shuttle bus for free. Those travelling with the student will need to pay for a bus ticket. This pass cannot be used to discount camping fees. In other federal public lands where an entrance fee is charged per vehicle, anyone in a vehicle with a 4th grade student that has a pass will be admitted for free.

With millions of acres of federal lands across the nation, there might be a place for students to explore right in their own backyard! Public lands provide opportunities for youth to be active, spend time with friends and family, and learn in outdoor classrooms and where history was made. Through these experiences, the initiative hopes to inspire the next generation of stewards, motivated to protect our public lands for future generations.

The Every Kid in a Park initiative has also provided additional opportunities for youth to explore the federal public lands throughout this area. In partnership with the Bishop Paiute environmental education program, Firstbloom, Devils Postpile National Monument is one of 186 federal sites to receive an Every Kid in a Park field trip grant from the National Park Foundation. This summer, Firstbloom participants will be engaged stewards of public lands—learning and volunteering to help protect public lands while exploring the Inyo National Forest, Devils Postpile National Monument, and Yosemite National Park.

Whether you're in fourth grade, or a fourth grader at heart, public lands are for us to explore, so get on your way!

Visitors to the Reds Meadow Valley are the area’s most important guardians. The valley has more than one hundred thousand people visiting each year. If all of those people watched over the plants, animals, geology, historic and archeological sites, imagine how well-protected these resources could be!

Unfortunately, there are people who either intentionally or unknowingly harm resources. Please contact a park official if you see any of the following:

- feeding or approaching wildlife
- hunting animals
- collecting reptiles or butterflies
- collecting plants or pine cones
- taking archeological/historic items
- carrying or using metal detectors to locate/collect historic objects
- driving vehicles into sensitive meadows and off roadways
- camping outside of designated campgrounds
- using weapons

Outside of the monument boundaries, the following is prohibited:

- feeding or approaching wildlife
- driving vehicles into sensitive meadows and off roadways
- camping outside of designated campgrounds except with a valid wilderness permit.

If you see activities that could harm people or resources, write descriptions or a vehicle license plate number and call (760) 934-2289. If someone’s life is in danger, call 911.

“Oh the places you’ll go, Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So get on your way!” Dr. Seuss’ rhyming and rallying charge captures the spirit of the Every Kid in a Park initiative, launched by the White House and Federal Land Management Agencies. In celebration of the National Park Service Centennial, fourth graders can obtain a pass that provides free access to students to all federally managed lands and waters. By introducing America’s youth at an early age to public lands, near and far, this program is a call to action to get all children to experience breathtaking places and meaningful stories throughout the nation.

Fourth graders can start the adventure by visiting: www.everykidinapark.gov. After playing an online game, the student can print a voucher which can be exchanged for a durable plastic Interagency Fourth Grade Annual Pass at federal lands centers that issue passes, such as the Welcome Center in Mammoth Lakes. This pass is good for the 2015-2016 school year and summer.

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The Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association (ESIA) is a non-profit organization that provides vital services to Devils Postpile National Monument and the Inyo National Forest which may not be available through federal funding. They provide books and educational materials in their bookstore at Devils Postpile, the Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center and the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center.

ESIA provides a connection to the Eastern Sierra and public lands through interpretive and education opportunities. ESIA achieves its mission by operating quality bookstores and through sponsoring interpretive projects and programs. Learn more at one of eleven locations or at www.esiaonline.org.  Proceeds from sales support local interpretive programs and projects.