



BRISTLECONE GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK



SUMMER, 1987

INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES

Welcome to Great Basin National Park

Welcome to Great Basin National Park; an area of surprising beauty and diversity. As the nation's 49th and newest national park, Great Basin enters a select corps of the finest and most valued portions of this nation's heritage which are protected as units of the National Park System. A concept which began with Yellowstone National Park in 1872 and has spread throughout this country and, indeed, around the globe, now has incorporated one of the most superlative examples of Great Basin geology, biologic diversity and scenic grandeur.

As you visit Great Basin National Park this season, you will find that programs and facilities are still being developed. We are entering into a planning process which will help us determine appropriate levels of development to accommodate visitor use, as well as to chart the course of park management over the next several years. Already this year, however, new Park Ranger conducted programs are being offered to help acquaint visitors with this special place. Schedules and program descriptions are to be found elsewhere in this newspaper. I encourage you to participate in these programs to enhance your appreciation of the park.

While Great Basin National Park is new, and improvements in facilities and operations will continue for many years, there is one constant trait which is already present. The sublime beauty of the area is here for all to enjoy. Whether you view the park while traveling in your family car along the Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive, while walking one of the trails to an alpine lake, or while backpacking the crest of the range, the scenic and natural splendor will refresh and renew. Enjoy your stay.

Albert J. Hendricks
Superintendent



Bristlecone Pine Trees live in the shadow of 13,063 foot Wheeler Peak

Great Basin bristlecone pines (*Pinus longaeva*), among the oldest trees in the world, occur near treeline in three groves in Great Basin National Park. These trees are remarkable for their great age and their ability to survive adverse growing conditions.

Bristlecone pines at treeline usually appear mostly dead. Many will be multi-stemmed and less than 30 feet tall, with only some of the branches and part of the trunk alive. The almost-dead appearance provides a clue to the continually changing environment at treeline.

In favorable years, a bristlecone pine grows as any other tree does, but in unfavorable years, the living foliage dies back until the moisture and nutrient requirements of the remaining foliage match the supply provided by the root system. The dense, resinous dead wood,

exposed to winter ice driven by high winds, becomes beautifully sculpted and polished.



The Wheeler Peak bristlecone pine grove is reached by a two-mile trail from the Wheeler Peak campground. A short self-guided nature trail is in the grove. During summer, rangers lead walks from the trailhead to the bristlecone grove. A schedule is found on page 2.

Please remember that everything natural is protected in a national park, including dead and down bristlecone wood. Some wood on the ground may be thousands of years old and important scientifically. Please leave all down wood in place.

The largest grove of bristlecone pines in the park is on Mt. Washington, approximately six miles south of the Wheeler Peak grove. Access is difficult. No developed trails exist in the grove. Some sections of this grove have relatively tall (over 40 feet) bristlecone pines that resemble high-elevation spruce or limber pine more than the typically gnarled treeline bristlecone pines. Unlike the Wheeler Peak grove, the trees on Mt. Washington grow primarily on limestone. In fact, nearby quartzite areas are notable for their lack of bristlecones.

The most remote grove in the

park is on a spur ridge, the divide between Baker Creek and Snake Creek. The terrain is steep and access is extremely difficult. These too favor limestone soils, while granitic soils in the area lack bristlecones.

The bristlecone pine's great age and sensitivity to climatic change makes it ideal for tree-ring research. By studying annual variations in tree-ring growth, scientists can accurately date the wood used in the construction of prehistoric pueblos in the Southwest, double-check dates from radiocarbon studies, and reconstruct the climate of the Southwest for the past 7,000 years. Dead bristlecone wood is as valuable to scientists as the living tree.



Exploring the Park

The Visitor Center is the best place to begin your visit to Great Basin National Park. Here you can get your tickets for one of the many daily tours through Lehman Caves, view a movie on the formation of the cave, and obtain general information and books that will aid you in the enjoyment of the park.

Near the Visitor Center is a picnic area, the historical Rhodes Cabin and a short nature trail. The Mountain View Nature Trail is a half mile (0.8 km) self guided loop that begins near the Rhodes Cabin. The guide booklet obtained at the Visitor Center adds information on trees, flowers, animals, geology and cave insights found along the trail.

Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive winds past the Lehman Creek Campground to the Wheeler Peak Campground. There are a number of scenic view pull-offs along the way. The first turnoff is located at the trailhead to remnants of the Osceola gold mining ditch. Stop at the Serene and Peak Overlooks to get a better view of the surrounding valleys and Wheeler Peak.

If you plan to photograph Wheeler Peak and its close neighbor Jeff Davis Peak, the early morning is the best time to see the alpenglow contrasting out the snow covered peaks and deep blue sky.



Spectacular Lexington Arch: A natural product of water and wind erosion.

Exploring the area of the six story high Lexington Arch about 18 miles south of the visitor center is an adventure. It includes driving gravel roads and a 2 mile hike up an obscure trail to this unusual limestone feature. In the spring you'll find many wildflowers blooming along the way. Check at the Visitor Center for more detailed directions.



Naturalist Activities

Cave Tours:

Hourly tours, M-F, 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. PDT. Sat. and Sun. 8 A.M., 9 A.M., every half hour 9:30-Noon, every half hour 1 P.M.-4 P.M., final tour at 5 P.M. Tour time 1½ hrs. Tour length ½ mile. Light jacket or sweater recommended.

Candlelight tours, daily 12:30 P.M.

Spelunking tours, Sat. and Sun. 1 P.M. Reservations recommended.

Nature Walks:

Bristlecone Pine Walk—Four miles; Four hour naturalist-led walk to the bristlecone pine grove. Meet at Wheeler Peak Campground trailhead. Daily at 1 P.M. through Labor Day.

Nature Walks—One mile; two hour naturalist-led walks; Sat. and Sun. Meet at the Visitor Center at 9 A.M.

All-Day Activity—Possibilities include climbing Wheeler Peak, visiting Lexington Arch, and remote park sections. Fridays Meet at the Visitor Center at 9 A.M.

Evening Campfire Programs:

Upper Lehman Creek Campground. Nightly, 7:30 P.M.

Wheeler Peak Campground. Every Sat. 7:30 P.M.



Important Information

Plants and Animals—Please leave plants and animals in their natural setting for others to enjoy. Picking wildflowers is not permitted. Do not approach or feed wild animals. Many animals carry diseases and should never be touched or fed. Rattlesnakes are generally shy and should never be approached. Notify a park ranger if a rattlesnake is found in a developed area. Feeding, harming, or killing wildlife is prohibited.

Pets—Pets must be on a leash and under physical control at all times. Pets are not permitted on trails, in the backcountry, the Visitor Center, nor on ranger-

led activities.

Fishing—A Nevada fishing license is required in Great Basin National Park.

Water Warning—Mountain stream water is very tempting to drink but may carry organisms that cause intestinal infections such as giardia and campylobacter. These microscopic organisms are transmitted into the water systems by livestock, wildlife, and humans. Water should be brought to a boil for five minutes to kill harmful organisms prior to consumption. Backpackers should bury human wastes at least 100 feet from any water sources.

Driving Tips—Observe posted speed limits and drive at slower speeds from dusk to dawn when wildlife is more present on roads. The Wheeler Peak Scenic Drive is a narrow, winding mountain road with steep grades and few turnouts. Ensure that your vehicle is in safe operating condition with a properly tuned engine, good tires and brakes. When approaching blind curves, always reduce speed and remain in right lane. All Great Basin travellers should carry a spare tire, fan belt, and extra water. Many park roads require four wheel drive vehicles. Inquire with park rangers about road conditions.

Camping in Great Basin

If you are interested in staying overnight in Great Basin National Park, there are several camping areas from which to choose. Wheeler Peak and Upper and Lower Lehman Creek Campgrounds are developed sites, complete with running water, restrooms,

picnic tables, tent-pads and barbeque pits.

Wheeler Peak Campground, situated at 9,950 feet, serves as a trailhead for trips leading to the Wheeler Peak Summit, the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest, and Stella and Teresa Lakes. Upper and Lower Leh-

man Creek (with pull-through sites for small RV's and trailers) and Baker Creek Campground are situated at more moderate elevations alongside a pleasant stream. A nightly fee of \$4.00 per campsite will be charged once the water systems are chlorinated.

Until then, please remember to use fresh water from the Visitors Center or boil all water for at least 5 minutes to ensure that it is safe.

Other undeveloped camping facilities within the park include Snake Creek and Shoshone Campgrounds. These areas

provide picnic tables, tent sites, and pit toilets - there is no water available at these sites.

All park campgrounds are on a first come, first serve basis - no advance reservations can be made.

Campgrounds

Lower Lehman Creek Campground 7,500 feet; eleven sites; water; pit toilets; 2 1/2 miles from the Visitor Center.

Upper Lehman Creek Campground 7,800 feet; 24 sites; water; pit toilets; one handicapped site; group picnic site available by reservation; 3 miles from the Visitor Center.

Baker Creek Campground 8,000 feet; 20 sites; water; pit toilets; 3 miles from the Visitor Center.

Wheeler Peak Campground 9,950 feet; 37 sites; water; pit toilets; 12 miles from the Visitor Center.

Note: Until chlorination systems are installed; all water available in Great Basin National Park campgrounds should be treated by boiling for 5 minutes before drinking.



Arrowleaf Balsamroot

Weather and High Elevation Warnings

A wide range of weather conditions may be experienced during your visit to Great Basin National Park. Temperatures of 90 degrees Fahrenheit or more are common during the summer months at lower elevations. Cooler temperatures are common at higher elevations and snowstorms are possible in the mountains any month of the year. Afternoon thunderstorms are common during the summer months.

Hypothermia is always a potential danger. It is a condition in which a person's entire body temperature is lowered. It can be avoided by wearing

appropriate clothing and being prepared for sudden changes in the weather.

Mountain Sickness is a condition brought on by ascending to high elevations too rapidly. Difficulty in breathing, nausea, headache, and lethargy are symptoms of a person experiencing mountain sickness. This condition is caused by a lack of oxygen at higher elevations. A victim with mountain sickness could be in serious danger and the proper remedy is to descend to lower elevations immediately. Individuals with heart conditions should avoid strenuous activity at higher elevations.

Visitor Services

WHISTLE STOP

- Snacks.
- Downtown Baker

THE "Y" TRUCK STOP

- Restaurant, bar, slots, gifts, gasoline, diesel, trailer hookups.
- Jct. U.S. 6&50 and NV Hwy. 487.
- (702) 234-7223.

JUDI'S ORIGINALS

- Gifts
- Downtown Baker
- (702) 234-7241

METALLIC ARTS

- Gifts
- Downtown Baker
- (702) 234-7240

BAKER SERVICE

- Gasoline, diesel, propane, minor auto repairs, groceries
- Downtown Baker
- (702) 234-7264

THE BORDER INN

- Restaurant, bar slots, gifts, gasoline, motel, showers
- Ut-Nev. stateline on Hwy 6&50
- (702) 234-9982

HITCHIN' POST

- Bar, slots, snacks, trailer hookups
- Downtown Baker
- (702) 234-9928

LEHMAN CAVES GIFT & CAFE

- Cafe, gifts
- Park Headquarters
- (702) 234-7221

MAJOR'S PLACE

- Restaurant, bar, slots, gasoline, trailer hookups
- 40 miles from Park
- Headquarters west on US Hwy. 6 & 50
- (702) 591-0391

THE OUTLAW

- Restaurant, bar, slots, gifts
- Downtown Baker
- (702) 234-7302

SILVER JACK MOTEL

- Motel
- Downtown Baker
- (702) 234-7323

WHEELER SERVICE & SUPPLY

- Gasoline, diesel, propane minor repairs, groceries
- Downtown Garrison, UT.
- (801) 855-2431

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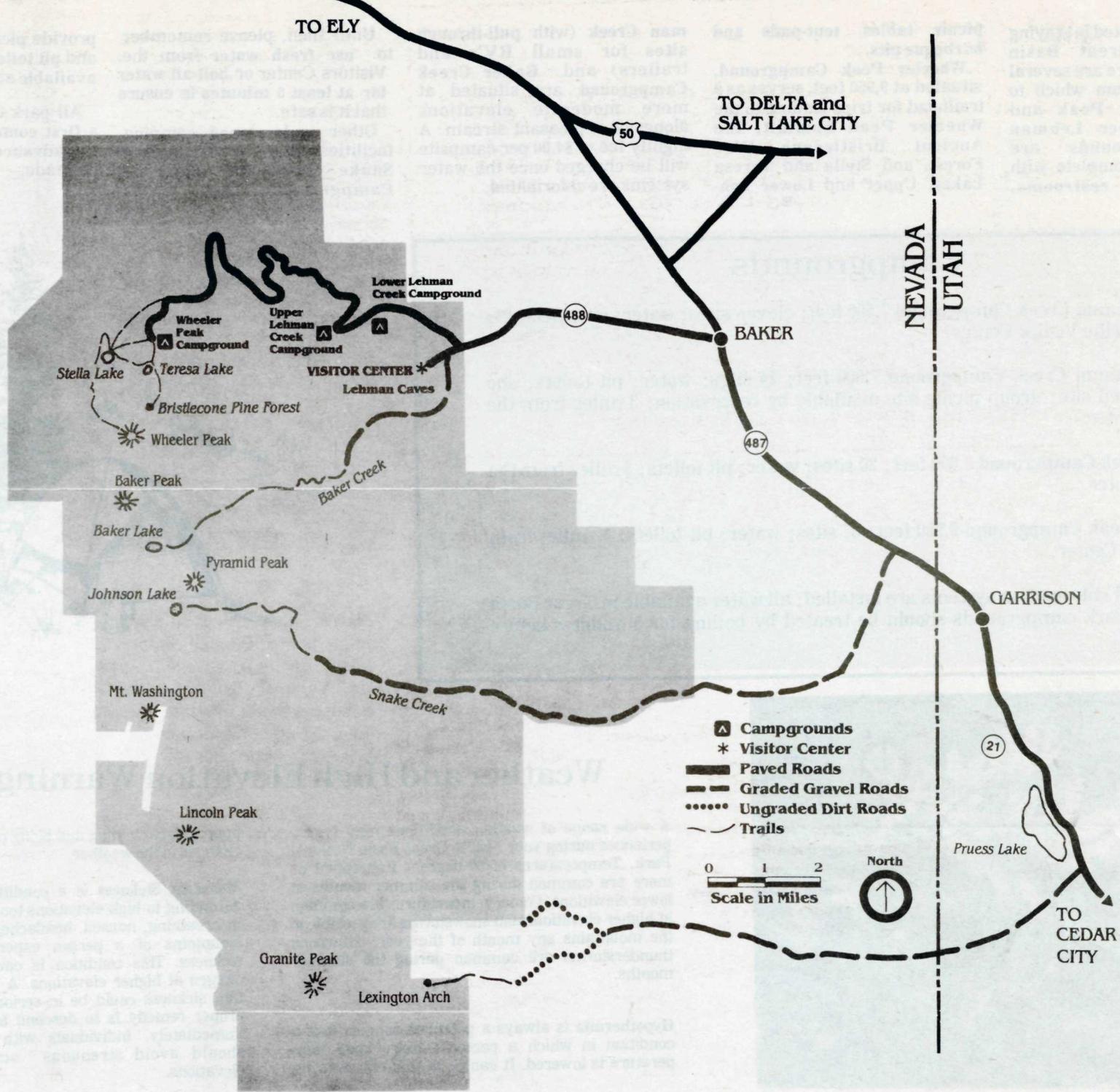
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COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

We would like to know if you enjoyed your visit. What can the National Park Service do to make your next visit more enjoyable?

Please write to: Superintendent Great Basin National Park, Baker, Nevada 89311.

GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK



Great Basin Natural History Association

The Great Basin Natural History Association aids and promotes the historical, scientific, and educational activities of the National Park Service. As a non-profit cooperating association authorized by Congress, it makes interpretive materials available to park visitors at Great Basin National Park by sale or free distribution. It also supports research, interpretation, and conservation programs of the Service.

The Great Basin Natural History Association formerly known as the Lehman Caves Natural History Association, is an organization which supported interpretation at Lehman Caves National Monument. With the creation of Great Basin National Park (which includes the former Lehman Caves National Monument), Congress

specifically authorized the National Park Service to provide interpretive information for the entire Great Basin physiographic region. The Great Basin Natural History Association will assist the National Park Service as it carries out this mandate of Congress.

Memberships in the Great Basin Natural History Association are available to the general public for \$2.00. Membership provides for a 15 percent discount on publications available at Great Basin National Park.

Visitors interested in joining the Great Basin Natural History Association in supporting the interpretive efforts of Great Basin National Park are encouraged to become members.

GREAT BASIN NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Occupation: _____

Membership Expiration Date: _____

(Memberships are annual, expiring on December 31 of the year the membership was obtained.)

You may become a new member or renew your membership by sending \$2.00 to the following address:

Great Basin NHA
Great Basin National Park
Baker, Nevada 89311