Park managers have been very stingy with so much recreational potential, it seems that National Park with such striking terrain and roadway we offer visitors. For an 86,416 acre about five times as lengthy as the amount of mountains National Park's 82-mile trail system is ups and downs. In fact, Guadalupe Mountains' lack of roads has little to do with road technology; it has, however, everything to do with the National Wilderness Preservation System.

In November of 1978 over half the Park —46,850 acres, to be exact—was congressionally designated as one of America's protected wilderness areas in our country's National Wilderness Preservation System. Today, 796 designated wilderness areas protect 109,187,393 acres in 44 states, and are managed by the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Wilderness areas can be enormous tracts of land encompassing swollen frigid rivers and forbidding glaciated peaks, such as the 9,078,679-acre Wrangell-St. Elias Wilderness in Alaska, or simply a narrow flyway along an unmarred coastline where millions of seabirds nest and perch among exposed reefs and miniature islands, such as the tiny 5-acre Rocks and Islands Wilderness in Northern California. Wilderness areas represent almost every single existing ecosystem in the United States: prairie grasslands, coral reefs, desert springs, mangrove forests, alpine tundra, sand dunes...the list is long and varied. Wilderness areas also protect little thought of and often taken for granted aspects of untrammeled nature, such as clean air, night sky, viewsheds, solitude, and silence. From bristlecone pines to jagged ridgelines and serpentine canyons, into a rugged landscape of craggy cliff faces, Permian-era limestone reef eroding away into a rugged landscape of craggy cliff faces, jagged ridgelines and serpentine canyons, was once, in itself, a formidable obstacle to vehicular exploration. But as anybody who has driven in Sequoia, Zion, the Everglades or Big Bend knows, when the Park Service has a will, it surely finds a way to build a road anywhere it needs to: to the bottoms of canyons, to the tops of mountains, through the harshest deserts and over the sponge-meshes. Nevertheless, the Guadalupe Mountains' lack of roads has little to do with road technology; it has, however, everything to do with the National Wilderness Preservation System.
Greetings

WELCOME TO CARLSBAD CAVENS AND GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARKS. Carlsbad Caverns National Park, a World Heritage Site since 1995, features a spectacular cave system of highly decorated chambers. Guadalupe Mountains National Park protects one of the world’s best examples of a fossilized reef. Both parks are located within the Chihuahuan Desert, a fascinating place to explore desert life.

Fall and Winter bring their own special rewards. From late-October to early-November the colorful changes in maples, ash, and sumac delight thousands of visitors to Guadalupe Mountains National Park. At Carlsbad Caverns National Park, the summertime crowds are gone and the cave can be experienced in its natural state of quiet. Both parks offer hiking opportunities. Rare winter snows are short-lived events and can only add to the beauty of these natural areas.

Park staff are here to help make your visit a truly memorable event. They will be happy to help you plan your visit and provide information. Guided tours at Carlsbad Caverns can enrich your park experience. These tours offer a variety of caving experiences, from easy lantern tours to challenging trips involving crawling and squeezing through tight passages.

Guadalupe Mountains National Park has over 80 miles of hiking trails to explore, ranging from wheelchair accessible paths to strenuous mountain hikes, including an 8.4 mile roundtrip hike to Texas’ highest mountain, Guadalupe Peak (8,749’).

As you travel and spend time in the area please remember to keep safety in mind. Road conditions may be icy. Deer and other wildlife are plentiful—enjoy watching wildlife, but remember they often move across roads, especially in the evenings, being vigilant while driving during twilight hours. Hikers should be prepared for rapidly changing weather conditions. Hikers can become dehydrated in our dry climate, so carry plenty of water (one gallon per person per day is recommended). Always check with a ranger before venturing into the backcountry.

We are wholeheartedly committed to our mission of preserving and providing for the enjoyment of our nation’s most outstanding treasures. We wish you a rewarding experience in every way.

Sincerely,

John C. Benjamin
Superintendent
Carlsbad Caverns NP

John V. Lujan
Superintendent
Guadalupe Mts. NP

Volunteerism Makes a Difference

WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE to the dedicated effort and talent that volunteers have brought to Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. Volunteers play a vital role in fulfilling our mission of preserving our natural and cultural heritage and sharing that heritage with the visiting public. Volunteers do everything from staffing the information desk, giving interpretation, patrolling surface and cave trails, to trail maintenance, research, cave restoration, and more. To become a volunteer contact:

Carlsbad Caverns National Park
Rachel Zimmer
575-785-3130

Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Craig Tanner
915-826-2451 ext. 102

Junior and Senior Ranger Programs

MANY NATIONAL PARKS ACROSS AMERICA OFFER A JUNIOR Ranger program for children to encourage interest in their national parks and to promote a sense of stewardship and ownership for these special places that they come to visit. This self-paced educational program allows children to earn a patch and/or certificate upon completion of required activities that teach them about park resources. Age appropriate activities are included in the Junior Ranger booklet, typically for pre-kindergarten through upper elementary-aged children.

At Carlsbad Caverns, the Junior Ranger program offers activities that teach children about the resources both above ground and below the surface (including plant and animal life of the desert, cave features and history of the park). Younger children have opportunities to color and draw, find objects on a visual scavenger hunt, use their senses to experience their surroundings and complete games. Older children will sequence events, complete word searches and write stories and poems. Each activity in the booklet is an optional activity depending on interest and age-level. Once the booklet is checked by a park ranger, the participant is presented a Carlsbad Caverns National Park Junior Ranger patch.

The Junior Ranger booklet is available through the Carlsbad Caverns-Guadalupe Mountains Association bookstores, located in the visitor center at the park. There is a charge of $1.00 to participate in the program, which includes the booklet and patch (given upon completion of the activities). Children of any age may participate.

At Guadalupe Mountains, children work through a separate activity booklet and visit points of interest within the park. The booklet accommodates families of varying travel plans. Many of the activities can be completed at the Headquarters Visitor Center located at Pine Springs. Children who complete three activities earn a badge and certificate, while those who do six earn a patch in addition to the badge and certificate. There is no charge for participation in the program, but donations are always welcome.

Senior Ranger programs are a new development, currently available at limited locations, aimed at an audience that enjoys a challenge, and wants to use an activity book to learn about the park and help plan their visit. A Senior Ranger program is available at Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

Senior Ranger books are available at the Headquarters Visitor Center at Pine Springs for anyone 13 years and older. Activities include visiting sites, learning about the park’s history, geology, flora and fauna. Upon completion, participants earn a patch and certificate.

Traveling with a Pet?

ON A WARM DAY THE TEMPERATURE INSIDE A CAR CAN KILL a pet. Do not leave your pets unattended.

At Carlsbad Caverns National Park, pets are not permitted in the cave or at flight programs. During the day, your pet may be cared for at the kennel for a small fee. A citation will be issued if animals are left in vehicles when ambient air temperatures are 70° Fahrenheit (21° Celsius) or higher.

At Guadalupe Mountains National Park, pets are not allowed on trails, in the backcountry, in buildings or at evening programs; they are permitted in the Pine Springs and Dog Canyon campgrounds.

In any national park, your pet must be physically restrained at all times.
The Carlsbad Caverns-Guadalupe Mountains National Parks (2 issues a year). In addition to these benefits, you will receive a free DVD on Carlsbad Caverns National Park or Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Most importantly, your contribution helps further our mission of providing aid to these parks.

Membership (1 year) $25.00
Jim White’s Own Story $6.95
Spirit of Exploration DVD $9.95
The Guadalupes $4.00
Stories from Stones $7.95

Purchases may be made by credit card or check. Include your address and daytime phone number. If ordering by credit card include the card number, the date of expiration, and the signature of the cardholder. The following cards are accepted: American Express, Discover, MasterCard, and Visa. Make checks payable to CCGMA.

Shipping and handling charges for book orders are as follows: $4.00 for purchases up to $15.00 $5.00 for purchases $15.00-30.00 $6.00 for purchases $30.00-90.00

In this book, Jim White tells of his initial discovery and early adventures in Carlsbad Cavern. Numerous historic black and white photos, 32 pages, 6x9.5 inches. $6.95

In this picture book provides a general overview of Guadalupe Mountains National Park history, biodiversity, and geology. Full color photography throughout, 32 pages, 8.5 x 11 in. $4.00

This DVD allows viewers to see and enjoy the beauty of the main caverns, bat flight and rarely visited portions of the park including newly discovered Lechuguilla Cave. 54 minutes $19.95

This introduction to Guadalupe Mountains’ geology has explanatory diagrams and photos. Includes sections on cave and speleothem formation. Color photography, 40 pages, 8.5 x 11 inches. $7.95
Carlsbad Caverns Cave Tours

NATURAL ENTRANCE SELF-GUIDED ROUTE
Length: 1.25 miles, 1 hour
Fee: Entrance Fee
This hike is similar to walking into a steep canyon (a descent of about 800 feet in one mile). It is recommended only for those physically fit and healthy, sturdy footwear is required. Highlights include the Natural Entrance, Devil’s Spring, Whale’s Mouth, and Iceberg Rock.

LEFT HAND TUNNEL
Fee: Entrance Fee and $10.00 Tour Ticket (Half price for children and Senior Pass cardholders)
On this lantern-tour your guide will highlight cave history, formations, cave pools and Permian Age fossils. Moderately difficult on dirt trail and uneven ground. Be aware that the dirt trail winds over small uneven or slippery slopes and careful footing is required to avoid cave pools and fragile formations. Lanterns are provided. Tour departs from the Underground Rest Area.

LOWER CAVE
Fee: Entrance Fee and $20.00 Tour Ticket (Half price for children and Senior Pass cardholders)
This strenuous tour is through a well-decorated backcountry cave. It is mandatory for each person to bring a minimum of two C-cell batteries and fresh batteries. Penlights are not sufficient. The route is slippery, muddy and may require an ascent of a 15-foot slope using a knotted rope.

SPIDER CAVE
Fee: $20.00 Tour Ticket (Half price for children and Senior Pass cardholders)
On this strenuous tour you can expect tight crawls, canyon-like passages and bizarre formations. Bring gloves, kneepads and four new AA alkaline batteries per person. We provide helmets and headlamps. Tour departs from the Underground Rest Area.

HALL OF THE WHITE GIANT
Fee: Entrance Fee and $20.00 Tour Ticket (Half price for children and Senior Pass cardholders)
This is a strenuous, challenging tour to a remote chamber in Carlsbad Cavern. You will be required to crawl long distances, squeeze through tight crevices and climb up slippery passages. Bring gloves, kneepads and four new AA alkaline batteries per person. We provide helmets and headlamps. Tour departs from the Underground Rest Area.

BIG ROOM SELF-GUIDED ROUTE
Length: 1.25 miles, 1.5 hours
Fee: Entrance Fee
Descend by elevator to start the tour in the Underground Rest Area. The non-skid trail is paved and mostly level, although there are a couple of short, steep hills. All visitors to Carlsbad Cavern should experience this tour. Highlights include the Lion’s Tail, Hall of Giants, Bottomless Pit, and Rock of Ages. This trail can be navigated by wheelchairs, with assistance. The park does not provide wheelchairs. This trail can also be accessed after hiking the 1.25-mile Natural Entrance Self-Guided Route.

KING’S PALACE GUIDED TOUR
Length: 1 mile, 1.5 hours
Fee: Entrance Fee and $8.00 Tour Ticket (Half price for children and Senior Pass cardholders)
Tours depart from the Underground Rest Area. Tickets may be purchased at the visitor center; however, reservations are recommended. You will visit four highly decorated chambers: King’s Palace, Papoose Room, Queen’s Chamber and Green Lake Room. The tour guide will turn out the lights for a blackout experience. The trail is paved, however, there is a steep hill that you must walk down and then back up.

Slaughter Canyon Cave
Fee: $15.00 Tour Ticket
This strenuous tour is through a well-decorated backcountry cave. It is mandatory for each person to bring a minimum of two C-cell batteries and fresh batteries. Penlights are not sufficient. The route is slippery, muddy and may require an ascent of a 15-foot slope using a knotted rope.

Do not drive to the visitor center for this cave tour.
Allow plenty of time to drive to Slaughter Canyon and 45 minutes for the steep and strenuous half mile hike to the cave entrance. Attempt this hike only if you are in good health.
Carry water—weather may be very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Stay on the trail and wear sturdy hiking shoes. Tours depart from the cave entrance at the scheduled time.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY TOURS
Mark your calendar for special lantern tours on November 27, and the annual Rock of Ages lantern tour and programs on December 19 and December 27.
Space is limited.
For more information call 575-785-2232.

Spring, Fall & Winter Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Entrance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Room</td>
<td>8:30 - 3:30</td>
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<td>Visitor Center</td>
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Summer Hours

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<td>Visitor Center</td>
<td>8:00 - 7:00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Visitors are encouraged to make reservations for guided tours at least six weeks in advance. Some tours fill quickly. Reservations are not necessary for self-guided tours. To make reservations call the National Park Reservation System at: 877-444-6777 or visit www.recreation.gov.

Have a Safe Tour

Cave temperature is 56° F (13° C) year-round. A light jacket or sweater and good walking shoes are recommended. Do not wear sandals. For your safety:

- Stay on the paved trail.
- Supervise children closely; children under 16 must remain with an adult at all times.
- Ask park rangers for help.
- Take prescribed medications with you.
- High humidity in the cave can affect respiratory problems; bring your inhaler just in case.
- If you are DIABETIC, be sure you have eaten enough calories.
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- Leave your pet at the kennel, not in your car.
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Protect the Cave

- Never touch, tap or handle the cave formations; the oils on your skin damage the formations.
- Never throw gum, food or drinks into the cave.
- Never throw coins or other objects into the pools.

Photography

Photography is permitted on most tours; however, please use good etiquette. Warn those around you before you flash, keep tripods on the trail, and do not use the rocks as your personal tripod. Video cameras are permitted on the Big Room, Natural Entrance, and King’s Palace tours. Please use caution and do not use the ultraviolet lights available on some cameras. Photography is not allowed at the Bat Flight Program offered from mid-May to mid-October.

Entrance Fees

Adults—age 16 and older: $8.00
Children—15 and younger: $3.00
Free for children 4 and under.
Free for Audit Guides.
Free for those who own any of the following passes: Half price for children and Senior Pass cardholders)
Fee: Entrance Fee and $15.00 Tour Ticket (Half price for children and Senior Pass cardholders)
 kilometre (3.3 mile). It is recommended only for those physically fit and healthy, sturdy footwear is required. Highlights include the Natural Entrance, Devil’s Spring, Whale’s Mouth, and Iceberg Rock.

There is no entrance fee for those who own any of the following passes up to three individuals plus the cardholder: The Annual Pass, Senior Pass, Access Pass (all three are part of the America the Beautiful—National Parks & Federal Recreation Lands Pass), Golden Age Passport and Golden Access Passport all cover the basic entrance fee. Pass holders must still obtain entry tickets.

Entrance fee applies to self-guided tours. Guided tours require an additional fee.

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- If you are DIABETIC, be sure you have eaten enough calories.
- If you have an infant with you, child-carrying backpacks are recommended.
- Strollers are not allowed.
- Leave your pet at the kennel, not in your car.

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Mark your calendar for special lantern tours on November 27, and the annual Rock of Ages lantern tour and programs on December 19 and December 27. Space is limited.
For more information call 575-785-2232.
Surface Activities

SERVICES
Facilities include a visitor center, exhibits, bookstore, restaurant, gift shop and kennel service. Ranger programs are offered daily. Other activities include:

NATURE TRAIL
This one-mile paved, partially accessible trail begins near the visitor center and highlights desert plants.

SCENIC DRIVE
A one-hour drive through the Chihuahuan Desert, this 9.5-mile gravel road is suitable for most vehicles except trailers and motor homes. Brochures are available for 50 cents. 

HIKING & CAMPING
RATTLESNAKE SPRINGS
This historic oasis includes a picnic area, shade trees, restrooms and excellent bird watching. Located 5.5 miles south of White’s City on Highway 62/180, then 2.5 miles west on County Road 48. Day use only.

BAT FLIGHT PROGRAMS (SUMMER ONLY)
A few hundred thousand bats fly from Carlsbad Cavern each evening from mid-May until the bats migrate to Mexico sometime in mid-October. The ranger program generally begins each evening 30 to 60 minutes before sunset at the park amphitheater, though weather and lightning can cause cancellation of the program. Check at the visitor center for the exact time the program starts or call 575-785-3012. Cameras are not allowed. The lights and high frequency sounds made by the cameras disturb the bats. This rule is strictly enforced.

NIGHT SKY WATCHING
Celebrate the Night October 17, Saturday
Dusk until 10:30 P.M.
After the batflight, join park rangers for an evening of star gazing and talks on the animals and insects that inhabit the night. Telescopes provided, bring a flashlight.

Leonid Meteor Shower & Star Gazing November 17, Wednesday
Dusk until 10:30 P.M.
The annual Leonid meteor shower should be at its peak tonight with up to 500 meteors per hour in some locations. Dress for the weather and bring a flashlight. Telescopes also available.

America the Beautiful—The National Parks & Federal Recreational Lands Pass

For Reservations call 877-444-6777
Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Hiking

Piney Trail
Distance: 6.7 miles
Difficulty: Easy, wheelchair accessible, slight incline on return trip.

Discover the desert as you walk to the ruins of the Pinery, a stagecoach station on the Butterfield Overland Mail Route in 1858. Trailsides exhibits.

McKittrick Canyon Trail
Distance: to Pratt Cabin 4.8 miles roundtrip, to the Grotto, 6.8 miles roundtrip
Difficulty: Moderate, level but rocky trail, 200' elevation gain to Grotto.

Follow an intermittent stream through the desert and canyon woodlands to the historic Pratt Cabin. A guidebook is available at the trailhead. The Grotto Picnic Area and Hunter Line Cabin are one mile beyond the Pratt Cabin. Please do not drink the water or wade in the creek. To protect this fragile environment, you are required to stay on the trail.

Guadalupe Peak Trail
Distance: 8.4 miles
Difficulty: Strenuous. Approximately 3,000' elevation gain, steep, rocky path.

Hike to the "Top of Texas" at 8,749' for spectacular views. Avoid the peak during high winds and thunderstorms. During warm temperatures, carry a gallon of water per person.

Camping

Water and restrooms are available, but there are no showers, RV hookups, or dump stations. The fee is $8.00 per night, per site, $4.00 with a Senior Pass (or existing Golden Age Passport) or Access Pass (or existing Golden Access Passport). No wood or charcoal fires are permitted; camp stoves are allowed.

Pinion Springs Campground
Located near the Headquarters Visitor Center, there are twenty tent and nineteen RV campsites (including a wheelchair accessible tent site) available on a first-come, first-served basis. Two group campsites are available for groups of 10-20 people. Reservations (for group sites only) can be made by phoning 956-835-3452 up to 60 days in advance. Campers planning on day hiking in McKittrick Canyon, to Guadalupe Peak or the Bowl, will want to stay here.

Dog Canyon Campground
Located at the end of New Mexico Highway 137, 70 miles from Carlsbad and 10 miles from Park Headquarters, at an elevation of 6,290' in a secluded, forested canyon on the north side of the park. The campground has nine tent and four RV campsites (including a wheelchair accessible tent site). There is one group site for groups of 10-20 people. Reservations for the group site only can be made up to 60 days in advance by calling 956-835-3452.

Backpacking

Eighty-five miles of trails lead through forests, canyons, and desert. A free permit is required if you plan to spend a night in the backcountry. Permits are issued at the Headquarters Visitor Center and the Dog Canyon Ranger Station. For those coming through Carlsbad, Dog Canyon is a great place to begin a backpacking trip because it requires less elevation gain to get into the backcountry.

Wood and charcoal fires are prohibited. Camp stoves are allowed. Pack out all your trash. Pets are not allowed on park trails. Firearms are not permitted within the park.

Preparation is the key to an enjoyable backpacking trip. Be prepared for changing weather conditions. Carry plenty of water—there are no water sources in the backcountry. Topographic maps, hikers’ guides, and information can be found at the Headquarters Visitor Center and the Dog Canyon Ranger Station.

Other Popular Hikes...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trailhead</th>
<th>Trail</th>
<th>Distance Roundtrip</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pine Springs</td>
<td>Devil’s Hall Trail</td>
<td>4.2 miles</td>
<td>Moderate. Rocky hike in Pinion Spring Canyon to the Hikers’ Staircase and Devil’s Hall. After the first mile, the trail drops into the wash. Turn left and follow the canyon bottom to Devil’s Hall, where a sign marks the end of the trail.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Bowl</td>
<td>8.5 miles</td>
<td>Strenuous. The Bowl shelters a high country conifer forest. Recommended route: Tejas Trail to Pine Top, Bowl Trail to Hunter Peak, Bear Canyon Trail, Frigole Trail back to campground. Trail climbs 2,500’. Bear Canyon Trail is very rocky and extremely steep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>El Capitan Trail</td>
<td>11.3 miles</td>
<td>Moderate. Desert lovers will appreciate the rocky amoyus and open vistas while skirting along the base of El Capitan. Recommended route: El Capitan Trail, Salt Basin Overlook, and return to Pine Springs on the El Capitan Trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triple Ranch</td>
<td>Manzanita Spring</td>
<td>4 miles</td>
<td>Easy. Path is paved and wheelchair accessible. Hike to a small pond that serves as a desert oasis. Dragonflies, butterflies, and birds are active here in the warmer months. During winter, bluebirds frequent the area. Opportunities for viewing upland and other wildlife are higher here as well.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smith Spring Trail (entire loop)</td>
<td>2.3 miles</td>
<td>Moderate. Task for birds, deer and elk as you pass Manzanita Spring on the way to the shady oases of Smith Springs. Trees around Smith Spring include madrones, maples, oaks, chinkapin, ponderosa pines and others.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McKittrick Canyon</td>
<td>0.9 miles</td>
<td>Moderate. Climb the foothills and learn about the natural history of the Chihuahuan Desert. Trailsides exhibits.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Permian Reef Trail</td>
<td>8.4 miles</td>
<td>Strenuous. For serious geology buffs, this trail has stop markers that can be used with a geology guidebook sold at the Visitor Center. There are excellent views into McKittrick Canyon from the ridgtop. Trail climbs 2,000’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dog Canyon</td>
<td>Indian Meadow Nature Loop</td>
<td>0.6 miles</td>
<td>Easy. A guide pamphlet describes ecology and geology.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marcus Overlook</td>
<td>4.6 miles</td>
<td>Moderate. Follow the Bush Mountain Trail to the ridgtop for a view into West Dog Canyon. Trail climbs 800’.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lost Peak</td>
<td>6.4 miles</td>
<td>Strenuous. Climb out of Dog Canyon on the Tejas Trail to visit the conifer forest above. Outstanding views from Lost Peak. Lost Peak is a short distance off-trail to the right before the horse hitches. Trail climbs 1,500’.</td>
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Weather

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<tr>
<th>Temperature (° F)</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Rainfall (inches)</th>
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<td>Sep</td>
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<td>Nov</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<td>Dec</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>Average annual precipitation for Pine Springs (1980-2003)</td>
<td>17.4</td>
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through and will not physically enter the designated wilderness area, they still experience the Park as an outstanding scenic backdrop on their way to Carlsbad, Van Horn, or El Paso.

Now, let’s imagine for a moment that we did have a scenic drive through the Park. Or, perhaps a road to the top of Guadalupe Peak, a tour bus route to Pratt Cabin, or even a direct route overland to Dog Canyon. What would we gain? More importantly, what would we lose? What, exactly, would we lose if a two-lane road was cut over the imposing crags, crevices and cliff faces of these limestone mountains, winding through once-serene relict ponderosa pine forests and soft meadows, leading hundreds, perhaps thousands of visitors a day to the top of Texas?

Quite simply, we would lose what we lose every time we take a wild area and make it tame.

Wilderness areas are the last strongholds of wild landscapes in our country. Although they often protect vast tracts of roadless terrain, they are not necessarily remote and unapproachable. Most wilderness areas are easily accessed from trailheads, roadsides or parking spaces. Chances are that within 200 miles of your front door, there is a wilderness area where you can immerse yourself in the quiet of an undisturbed moment. The clean, mossy scent of Smith Spring, the cool shade of McKittrick Canyon and the howl of the wind against El Capitan are less than a two-hour drive from bustling and hectic urban centers, yet, when entering the Guadalupe Mountains’ wilderness area, we may feel like the rest of the world is a million miles away.

So, perhaps building a road to the top of Guadalupe Peak may bring ten, twenty or thirty times more visitors than what Guadalupe Mountains National Park receives now. Perhaps the Park’s budget and staffing would increase tenfold; perhaps we could even open a restaurant with a salad bar to accommodate waves of hungry visitors. The truth is, we’ll never know, because in 1978, 46,850 acres were set aside in the Guadalupe Mountains to preserve and protect the essence of wilderness in these stark Chihuahuan desert mountains, and this is why the National Wilderness Preservation System exists: to remind us that there is a degree of wilderness that is fundamental to our existence, that this wilderness is an inherent part of our humanity, and that we need to protect that very wilderness from ourselves in order to call it our very own.

In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.
LIVING DESERT ZOO & GARDENS STATE PARK  
575-887-5316  

Come face to face with a mountain lion at this unique zoo and botanical garden offering an opportunity to experience the Chihuahuan Desert first-hand. See a large collection of live animals, including the rare Mexican gray wolf, and the roadrunner, the state bird of New Mexico. There is also an unusual collection of cacti and other succulents from around the world.

Open daily except December 25. Wheelchair accessible.

Summer Hours  
(Memorial Day to Labor Day)  
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Last tour entry—6:30 p.m.

Winter Hours (after Labor Day)  
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Last tour entry—3:30 p.m.

Fees  
Ages 13 and up  $5.00  
Children 7 - 12  $3.00  
Children 6 and under free  
Group (20+) discount available.

BRANTLEY LAKE STATE PARK  
575-457-2184  

Located 12 miles north of Carlsbad on U.S. Highway 285, the campground has 51 RV sites with water and RV electric hookups (a few with sewer), a dump station, playground, restrooms with hot showers, shelter, tables and grills. Other facilities include picnic areas with sheltered tables and grills, playground, a fishing dock, boat ramps with docks, and a visitor center.

Open all year—24 hours/day. Wheelchair accessible.

Fees  
Day Use Only—$5.00 per vehicle  
Camping—$14.00 per night ($8.00 for each additional vehicle driven into the same site)  
Primitive Camping Area—$8.00 per vehicle per night.

LINCOLN NATIONAL FOREST  
575-884-4881  

The forest encompasses 1,003,441 acres for hiking, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, hunting and sightseeing. Maps are available at the Guadalupe Ranger District Office located in the Federal Building, 114 S. Halagueno, Room 159, in Carlsbad.

Sitting Bull Falls  
(in Lincoln National Forest)  
Wheelchair accessible.

Day use only—no camping.  
Entrance fee—$5.00 per vehicle or free with interagency Annual Pass.

Seven miles southwest of State Highway 137 on Forest Route 276, this 130 foot falls is one of the highest in New Mexico. Picnic area, trails and restroom.

Fees  
$5.00 per person (16 years and older)  
Free for Senior, Access and Annual Pass cardholders

Hours  
McKittrick Canyon  
Through November 1, 2009  
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Mountain Time)  
After November 1, 2009  
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Mountain Time)

The best color viewing is in McKittrick Canyon between the Pratt Cabin and the Grotto. The roundtrip distance for the Pratt Cabin hike is 5 miles and takes 2-3 hours to complete. The roundtrip distance for the Grotto Hike is 7 miles and takes 4-5 hours to complete. Both hikes are on level, but rocky trails. Sturdy footwear is recommended.

There are no restrooms available in McKittrick Canyon. Hikers must carry their own food and water. Picnic tables can be found at the Pratt Cabin and the Grotto. Please pack out all of your trash.

Weekends can be very busy. To avoid crowds, try visiting on weekdays or hiking in Devil’s Hall or Dog Canyon as alternatives.