by Carolyn Hunt

FOR GENERATIONS OUR ANCESTORS
looked to the heavens and saw a sky full of
stars. If you have never seen such a sight, it
is something to behold! Imagine the inky
black of night painted with a delicate misty
glow; this is the Milky Way. The Milky Way
is joined by bright stars twinkling—dashing
red, blue, green, white. They seem to dance
in the sky. This view has been described as
numinous, evoking feelings of mystery,
holiness, and spirituality. Some cultures even
had myth, legend, and religion entwined
with the stars.

Today, the stars often play a diminished
role in our lives. Most people live in cities
where even the night is bright, living in light
24 hours a day. We often have to travel great
distances to see what is directly overhead.
The tapestry of the heavens is hidden by a
veil of human-made light. Consider the
picture (right). Can you pick out where you
are from? Places like Chicago, Los Angeles,
Portland, Washington, D.C., and the entire
outline of Florida are emblazoned on the
earth. You can see that cities are in stark
contrast to the nearby, uninhabited water
bodies of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans,
the Great Lakes, and the Gulf of Mexico.

This human-caused lighting of the night was
noticed by some people, particularly astro-
nomers. Astronomers often have a keen interest
in light pollution, as they look to the stars to
seek answers and make predictions. This is
important as well. “Warmer” colors, such as am-
bers, are useful for a few reasons. They de-
crease sky brightness, are easier on the eyes,
and are less susceptible to insects.

To get a light that is “just right” follow these
handy tips:

1. WHERE: Use light where you need it. Choose locations of lights carefully and only install a light where it is truly needed.

2. SHIELD: Pick lighting fixtures that shield the light. A fixture which directs light to the ground is essential. Shielded light fixtures, or a 9 watt compact fluo-
rescent, is usually enough to light a porch or driveway.

3. BRIGHTNESS: Consider the brightness of the light. The brightness of a light is called lumens, the amount of light. A 25 or 40 watt incandescent bulb, or a 9 watt compact fluo-
rescent, is usually enough to light a porch or driveway.

4. WHEN: Consider when light is needed. Installing sensors can allow the light to come on when people are present and using the light. Sensors then turn the light off when it is not needed.

5. COLOR: The color of the light is impor-
tant as well. “Warmer” colors, such as am-
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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 round-trip hike to Texas’ highest moun-
tain, Guadalupe Peak (8791’, 2667m).

As you travel and spend time in the area
please remember to keep safety in mind. Deer and other wildlife are plentiful—en-
joy watching wildlife, but remember they
often move across roads, especially in the
evenings; be 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 gal-
lon per person per day is recommended).
Always check trail conditions and weather
forecasts 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 experi-
ence in every way.

Sincerely,

Douglas S. Neighbor
Superintendent
Carlsbad Caverns National Park

Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Eric Brunennann
Superintendent
Guadalupe Mountains National Park

Though my soul may set in dark-
ness, it will rise in perfect light;
I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.

—Sarah Williams

A time-lapsed photo captures the Milky Way overhead in all of its magnificence and light pollution on the horizon.

There are many ways in which residents of
Sedona, Tucson—and other people con-
cerned with reducing their light pollution—
decrease light pollution going skyward. If
one is to have a night-sky-friendly light you
will get a “goldilocks” light. The light is just
right, nor too much, nor too little.

Cosmos

The United States at night. Photo by NASA Earth Observatory/NOAA NGDC.

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Cosmos

An Awe-Inspiring Beauty

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and are less susceptible to insects.

Efforts like those listed above have contrib-
uted to Sedona, Arizona’s status as a “Dark
Sky Community,” recognized by the Interna-
tional Dark Sky Association.

Astronomers are not the only ones who ben-
efit from darkness. Animals also need night.

...continued on page 3

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Guadalupe Mountains National Park

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What Time is It?

Because Guadalupe Mountains National Park is close to the Central Time Zone, your phone will display the wrong time unless you set it to Mountain Time.

Traveling with a Pet?

On a warm day the temperature inside a car can kill a pet. Do not leave your pets unattended.

At Guadalupe Mountains National Park, pets are allowed only on all paved roads, pullouts, and parking areas, along Walnut Canyon Desert Drive (Loop Road), on the paved Nature trail, and at Battle-snake Sprunge picnic area. Pets must be kept on a leash at all times. Pets are not permitted in the cave or at the bat flight programs. However, service animals are allowed. During the day, your pet may be cared for at the concessions kitchen for a $10 fee. Call 975-785-2232 for details. A citation will be issued if animals are left in vehicles when ambient air temperatures will reach 70° Fahrenheit (21° Celsius) or higher.

At Guadalupe Mountains National Park, pets are allowed only on the Pinery Trail, while on leash, but are not allowed on other trails, in the backcountry, in buildings, or at evening programs. Service animals are allowed. Both pets and service animals are permitted in the Pine Springs and Dog Canyon campgrounds. In any national park, your pet must be physically restrained at all times.

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, roving interpretation, patrolling surface and cave trails, to trail maintenance, cave restoration, and more.

To become a Volunteer-In-Park (VIP) visit www.volunteer.gov or contact:
Carlsbad Caverns National Park
Maggi Daly, Volunteer-In-Park Coordinator
575-734-1353
Guadalupe Mountains National Park
Brian Schwieger, Volunteer-In-Park Coordinator
915-828-3251 ext. 2301

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 badge 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. The Junior Ranger booklet is available at the visitor center information desk. Children of all ages may participate and earn a badge. The program is free.

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 Pine Springs Visitor Center or Dog Canyon Contact Station. Children who complete four 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. Junior Paleontologist, Wilderness Explorer, and Night Sky Explorer Activity Books are also available. Participants will earn a badge (Jr. Paleontologist) or patch (Wilderness Explorer, Night Sky Explorer) upon completion.

Senior Ranger programs are a new development, currently available at limited locations, aimed at an audience who enjoys a challenge and wants to use an activity book to learn about the park and help plan their visit. Senior Ranger books are available at the Pine Springs Visitor Center, Dog Canyon Contact Station, and the Carlsbad Caverns Visitor Center 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.

The National Park Service also offers an online WebRanger program for those who are unable to visit a national park, featuring activities about sites found across the nation. The activities illustrate principles in natural science and American history in new ways. To learn more, visit www.nps.gov/webrangers.
Moon Phases & Meteor Showers

Sky programs at both parks. You can also with your families and friends. A ranger-expansive view of the night. There are a number of unique experiences with your families and friends. A ranger-guided tour is one of them. Ask about night time programs at both parks. You can also take a self-guided tour of the stars by finding a good place to look up into the sky. Below you can check to see which dates are best for viewing the stars (new moon) or night hiking (full moon and first quarter). For more information go to https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nightskies/index.htm

Moon Phases & Meteor Showers

September
- Full Moon (9/8), Last Quarter (9/13), New Moon (9/19), Autumnal Equinox (9/22), First Quarter (9/27)

October
- Full Moon (10/5), First Quarter (10/12), New Moon (10/19), Orionid Shower (10/21), First Quarter (10/27)

November
- Full Moon (11/3), Last Quarter (11/10), Leonid Shower (11/17), New Moon (11/24), First Quarter (11/26)

December
- Full Moon (12/3), Last Quarter (12/18), Geminid Shower (12/13), New Moon (12/17), Winter Solstice (12/22), Ursid Shower (12/22), First Quarter (12/26)

January
- Full Moon (1/1), Quadrantid Shower (1/3), Last Quarter (1/18), New Moon (1/19), First Quarter (1/24), Full Moon (1/31)

February
- Last Quarter (2/7), Penumbral Shower (2/12), New Moon (2/15), First Quarter (2/23)

Deadly Disease Continues to Kill Bats

by Dale Pate

Bats are important for ecosystems across the country and the world. They are excellent pollinators and eat millions of tons of insects nightly. Some of these insects are pests of food crops. A study conducted in the 1980’s on the Brazilian (Mexican) Fruit-tailed bats from Carlsbad Cavern shows that 40 percent of the insects devoured by these bats are crop pests taken along the farmlands of the nearby Pecos River. Bats are important.

Unfortunately, beginning in the winter of 2006-2007, a new and very deadly disease began to decimate bats that hibernate. Bat deaths were immediately associated with a white fungus growing around noses, ears, and on wing membranes. This condition was later named “White-nose Syndrome” (WNS). Since 2006, over five million bats have been killed by this disease and as of this summer, WNS has been detected in nine species of bats that hibernate. Death rates of various colonies have been from 90 percent to 100 percent of all bats in that particular colony. An additional concern is that WNS is spreading rapidly. It is now found in caves and mines in 31 states.

There are lots of unknowns concerning WNS. At this time, it does not appear to be affecting summer bat colonies such as Brazilian Free-tailed bats for which Carlsbad Cavern is famous. We must all be vigilant.

While it is known that transmission of the fungus is mostly from bat-to-bat, it may also be possible for humans to transport fungus spores on clothing, gear, shoes, or skin. In an effort to slow down the spread of fungus, a bath is one of the few things you can do to help control the spread of this deadly disease. Everyone can help in the following ways:

If you have been in a cave or mine that is known to harbor WNS, or if you have been in a cave or mine within a state known to have WNS, please do not bring any of the potential-contaminated items (clothing, gear, shoes) used during that visit into Carlsbad Cavern or other caves.

States known to have WNS include:
- A: AR, CT, DE, GA, IA, IL, IN, KY, MA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MO, NE, NH, NJ, NY, NC, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN, VA, VT, WA, WI, and WV. Provinces in Canada known to have WNS include New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Quebec.

If you are taking one of the ranger-guided off-trail trips offered by Carlsbad Caverns National Park, please use the gear furnished by the park on those tours. Also, clean your shoes and other clothing before entering the cave.

The Guadalupe Ridge Trail stretches from White’s City, NM to the highest point in Texas, Guadalupe Peak. Above is a view from the Lincoln National Forest looking into Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

The students very quickly gained a new appreciation for resource conservation, visitor management, and business development. The spatial data and attributes generated by the students were assembled into a map suitable for public presentation utilizing geographic mapping software called ArcGIS. Attribute data was made available to the respective land management agencies for planning purposes, and the same data helped the social studies students with their proposed business models. The students presented the results of their work to representatives of the federal agencies as well as the general public at the dedication of the GRT. All the students did a fantastic job of presenting their findings and interacting with visitors and dignitaries in a professional manner.

The students of the Early College High School are a group of highly motivated and intelligent young people. Hopefully some of those students, engaged by their experience on the GRT, will turn their career pursuits to entrepreneurial business and land management, or even careers with public lands such as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and BLM.

by Michael Medrano

In May 2017, a partnership consisting of federal land agencies and local community organizations in Carlsbad, NM celebrated the designation of the Guadalupe Ridge Trail (GRT). Organizations involved in the effort included: the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Carlsbad Early College High School (CECHS), and the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce. The GRT crosses White’s City, through Carlsbad Caverns National Park, BLM land, the Lincoln National Forest, and Guadalupe Mountains National Park terminating at Guadalupe Peak. At approximately 100 miles long, the trail is being touted as an extreme challenge even for experienced backpackers.

In February, after meeting with Principal Eric Spencer, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, and the Lincoln National Forest, Guadalupe Mountains National Park staff turned to the CECHS for help with the GRT’s marketing and field mapping. In turn, CECHS students learned real-world applications on advertising, marketing, and land management principles. Students from Gav Mack’s Social Studies class produced marketing logos and business plans for startup businesses that could be affiliated with the new trail. These students developed business partnerships with other businesses that could accommodate the needs of hikers, providing such necessities as shuttle services, outfitting, food and water delivery, clothing accessories, and even pet services.

For the class mapping project, Hannah VanScotter’s science students were responsible for documenting trail and resource conditions on three segments of the GRT with Global Positioning System units (GPS). The students searched for plant and animal species of concern (rare/threatened species as well as invasive species), infrastructure (trail intersections, signage, water bars, stairs), archaeological resources, water sources, human impacts (graffiti) and hazardous or potentially hazardous trail conditions (erosion). The tasks were designed to strengthen the students’ GPS field documentation, and observation skills, but also to expose the students to the challenges facing land managers who manage trails and facilities for the American public. The students spent a combined total of over 1000 hours working on GRT issues and resources.

The Guadalupe Ridge Trail project is a partnership between community and government agencies...
If a lion is sighted, there are several things to remember:

- Do not approach a lion, especially one that is feeding or with kittens. Most mountain lions will try to avoid confrontation. Give them a way to escape.
- Stay calm, speak calmly yet firmly.
- Face the lion and stand upright. Do all you can to appear larger. Raise your arms, or open your jacket.
- Protect small children by picking them up so they won’t panic and run.
- Back away slowly, if you can do it safely.
- Fight back if a lion attacks you. People have fought back successfully with rocks, sticks, jackets, and their bare hands. Protect your head and neck with your arms. Remain standing or try to get back up.
- Please report all mountain lion sightings to a park ranger.

When you hike in mountain lion country:
Travel in groups. Lions may key in on easy prey, like small children. Make sure children are close to you and within your sight at all times—do not let children run ahead of adults! Talk with children about lions and teach them what to do if they meet one.

First aid for a snakebite:

- Get the victim away from the snake. Rattlesnakes strike across a distance equal to half their body length and can bite more than once. Do not attempt to capture or kill the snake.
- Remove constrictive jewelry such as rings and watches.
- Suction with a venom extractor is only minimally effective and must be started within two to three minutes. Do not attempt oral suction or incising the skin.
- Use a sling or a splint to immobilize the limb loosely; keep it below the level of the heart.
- Look for signs of envenomation: severe burning pain at the bite site; swelling starting within 5 minutes and progressing up the limb (swelling may continue to advance for several hours); discoloration and blood-filled blisters developing in 6 to 48 hours; and in severe cases, nausea, vomiting, sweating, weakness, bleeding, coma, and death. In 25% of rattlesnake bites, no venom is injected.
- If there are immediate, severe symptoms, keep the victim quiet; activity increases venom absorption. Have someone contact a ranger as soon as possible to begin evacuation.
- If there is no immediate reaction, you may choose to walk slowly with the victim to the trailhead. Begin evacuation as quickly as possible; contact a ranger for assistance. If evacuation is prolonged and there are no symptoms after six to eight hours, there has probably been no envenomation. However, all bites can cause infection and should be treated by a physician.
- Transport the victim to a medical facility where antivenin is available. The closest facility to the park is Carlsbad Medical Center, at the north end of Carlsbad, New Mexico on US 285 (2430 West Pierce); driving time is 1½ hours from Pine Springs.

Do not use these methods to treat a snakebite:
- A tourniquet, which causes severe damage if wound too tightly.
- Cold or ice; it does not inactivate the venom and poses a frostbite hazard.
- The “cut-and-suck” method; it can damage blood vessels and nerves.
- Mouth suction, your mouth is filled with bacteria, and you may infect the wound.
- Electric shock; no medical studies support this method.
- Alcoholic beverages, which dilate vessels and compound shock.
- Aspirin, which increases bleeding.

If you have been bitten by a snake:

- Call a park ranger. They have the knowledge and equipment to handle the situation.
- Do not attempt to move the victim; simply walk around it and continue your hike.
- To avoid rattlesnake bites, stay on trails where you are more easily able to see a snake. Watch where you put your hands and feet, look around before sitting down. If you see a rattlesnake, leave it alone. Alert other members of your party. Do not attempt to move it, simply walk around it and continue your hike.

Mountain Lions

With their large size and very long tails, mountain lions are unmistakable. Adult males may be more than 8 feet in length and weigh an average of 150 pounds. Adult females may be up to 7 feet long and weigh an average of 90 pounds. Their tracks show 4 toes with 3 distinct lobes present at the base of the pad, which is generally greater than 1.5 inches wide. Claw marks are usually not visible since their claws are retractable.

Mountain lions take their prey, usually deer, by ambush. After spotting prey, a lion stalks using available cover, then attacks with a rush, often from behind. They usually kill with a powerful bite below the base of the skull, breaking the neck, then drag the carcass to a sheltered spot beneath a tree or overhang to feed on it. Often they cover the carcass with dirt or leaves and may return to feed on it over the course of a few days.

Although no one has had a physical encounter with a mountain lion at Guadalupe Mountains National Park, sightings have become more frequent in the last few years. Lions have increasingly shown more curiosity about people and less fear. Even with this increased lion activity, your chance of seeing one of these elusive creatures is extremely low. A few simple precautions may reduce the risk of a dangerous encounter.

Rattlesnakes

Rattlesnakes are the only venomous snakes found in the Guadalupe Mountains. They are recognized by the triangular, flat head, wider than the neck, vertical, elliptical pupils, and a heat-sensitive “pit” located between the eye and the nostril. Rattles are generally present, but may be broken off.

To avoid rattlesnake bites, stay on trails where you are more easily able to see a snake. Watch where you put your hands and feet, look around before sitting down. If you see a rattlesnake, leave it alone. Alert other members of your party. Do not attempt to move it, simply walk around it and continue your hike.

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Hiker Safety for Different Weather Conditions

Lightning may be the most awesome hazard faced by hikers. In our area, storms are common from May through September, and usually occur in the late afternoon or early evening. You can estimate the distance of a lightning strike in miles by counting the time in seconds between flash and sound and dividing by five.

The effects of being close to a lightning strike may be minor, such as confusion, amnesia, numbness, tingling, muscle pain, temporary loss of hearing or sight, and loss of consciousness. Severe injuries include burns, paralysis, coma, and cardiac arrest. Since injuries may not be obvious initially—burns and cardiac injury may not appear until 24 hours after the lightning strike—medical observation is recommended for all lightning victims.

Decrease your risk of injury from lightning:

- Get an early start so that you can finish your hike before storms erupt.
- Be aware of current and predicted weather. Watch the sky for developing light or gray, wooly clouds. If a storm is building, descend to lower elevations.
- If a storm occurs, seek shelter. A car or large building offers good protection. Tents offer no protection.
- Turn off cell phones and other electronic equipment.
- If totally in the open, avoid single trees.
- When caught in heavy lightning, the best stance is to crouch with feet close together, minimizing the opportunity for ground currents to find a path through the body. Crouch on a dry sleeping pad, if available.
- Stay out of shallow caves or overhangs. Large dry caves which are deeper than 15 feet are abnormally cold and can be life threatening. The victim's behavior changes from alert to apathetic to unresponsive. The victim's skin will be cold, pale and blue-laden, and can be life threatening. Wetness and wind are a lethal combination that chill a person more rapidly than dry cold. Hypothermia can occur in any season of the year: the hiker exposed to a sudden summer hailstorm while wearing only a T-shirt and shorts is more likely to become hypothermic than a well-dressed winter hiker. Windchill adds to the problem, but affects only the exposed parts of the body. Wearing windproof clothing reduces the effects of windchill.

Prevention

Drink plenty of water when exercising in hot weather, before feeling thirsty and after feeling satisfied. Drink enough to produce clear urine regularly during the day. Eat high carbohydrate foods for energy. Avoid heavy exercise in high temperatures and high humidity. Wear light-colored clothes that fit loosely and cover all sun-exposed skin surface. Avoid alcohol and caffeine; both increase loss of fluid.

Treatment

- Have the victim rest in the shade.
- Remove excess clothing.
- Wet the victim to increase evaporation.
- Have the victim drink fluids, if available, add 1 1/4 teaspoon salt and 6 teaspoons sugar to 1 quart of water.
- In serious cases, begin immediate, rapid cooling by one of these methods:
  a) Increase evaporation by splashing water on the skin and fanning vigorously.
  b) Immerse the victim's body in cool water.
  c) Place cold packs on the neck, abdomen, arms, and groin.
- Stop cooling when mental status improves. Continue to monitor the victim.
- Contact a park ranger for assistance.

Heat

The body balances heat loss against heat gain to keep the core body temperature within narrow limits. With strenuous exercise in hot climates, heat gain can exceed loss. Core temperatures may rise, sometimes to dangerous levels. Dehydration exacerbates heat illness.

Heat Exhaustion develops over hours due to water and electrolyte loss from sweating, it causes collapse or gradual exhaustion with an inability to continue to exercise. Symptoms include headache, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps, rapid pulse, thirst and profuse sweating, goose-flesh, chills, and pale skin, and low blood pressure—the victim may faint.

Heatstroke occurs in people who undertake heavy exertion in hot climates, and results in sudden collapse with extreme elevation of body temperature, decreased mental status, and shock. It is a medical emergency that can kill, begin treatment immediately. Symptoms include headache, drowsiness, irritability, unsteadiness, confusion, convulsions, coma, a rapid pulse and low blood pressure, and either dry or sweat-moistened hot skin.

Prevention

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- Have the victim rest in the shade.
- Remove excess clothing.
- Wet the victim to increase evaporation.
- Have the victim drink fluids, if available, add 1 1/4 teaspoon salt and 6 teaspoons sugar to 1 quart of water.
- In serious cases, begin immediate, rapid cooling by one of these methods:
  a) Increase evaporation by splashing water on the skin and fanning vigorously.
  b) Immerse the victim's body in cool water.
  c) Place cold packs on the neck, abdomen, arms, and groin.
- Stop cooling when mental status improves. Continue to monitor the victim.
- Contact a park ranger for assistance.
Carlsbad Caverns National Park

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is permitted on most tours; however, please use proper etiquette. Wear those around you before using a flash, and do not use the rocks as your personal tripod. For safety reasons, tripods are not allowed on any guided tours. Tripods are allowed in the Big Room, Main Corridor, or Natural Entrance. Do not use the ultra-bright lights available on some cameras. Electronic devices are not allowed at the Bat Flight Program Entrance. Do not use the ultra-bright lights in the Big Room, Main Corridor, or Natural Entrance for safety reasons, tripods are not allowed however, please use proper etiquette. Warn visitors not to use lights.

Entrance Fees

Visit www.nps.gov/cave for dates and times of tours, or call 575-785-2232.

- Adults—age 16 and older: $10.00
- Children—one-5 and younger: free
- Plus Audio Guide: $5.00

All fees and tours are subject to change.

Reservations

We recommend that you 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

Reserved tickets must be picked up no later than 30 minutes prior to the posted tour starting time. Tickets will not be issued if within 10 minutes of the start of any tour.

No refunds for late arrivals.

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.
• Avoid the use of any Taylor Swift products that can affect respiratory problems; bring your inhaler just in case.
• If you are pregnant, 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.

Protect the Cave

• Never touch, tap or handle the cave formations; the oils on your skin damage the cave surface.
• Never take gum, tobacco, food, or drinks other than plain water into the cave.
• Never throw coins or other objects into the pools.

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 required. Highlights include the Natural Entrance, Devil’s Spring, Whale’s Mouth, and Iceberg Rock.

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. Some of 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.

LOWER CAVE

Fee: Entrance Fee and $8.00 Tour Ticket (Half price for children, Senior Pass, and Access Pass cardholders)

Strenuous. Initial descent is ten feet down a flowstone slope by knotted rope, then a fifty-foot descent down three sets of ladders. Bring three new AA alkaline batteries. Sturdy, closed-toed shoes or hiking boots required. Helmets and headlamps provided. Backpacks not allowed. Recommended for anyone with a fear of enclosed spaces, heights, or darkness. Tours depart from the visitor center.

SLAUGHTER CANYON CAVE

Fee: $8.00 Tour Ticket (Half price for children, Senior Pass, and Access Pass cardholders)

Strenuous. Tour meets at the visitor center. Participants will then caravan to the cave site. Participants must hike a steep, rocky, and uneven 1/2 mile trail with 500’ elevation gain to the cave entrance. Bring water and sunscreen for the hike. The tour is slippery, muddy, and requires an ascent of a 15’ slope using a knotted rope. Must wear sturdy, closed-toed hiking boots or shoes. Bring three AA batteries. Helmets and headlamps are provided.

Carry water—weather may be very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Stay on the trail and wear sturdy hiking shoes.

SURFACE ACTIVITIES

SERVICES

Facilities include a visitor center, exhibits, bookstore, restaurant, gift shop and kennel service.

INFORMATION & EXHIBITS

Elevation 4,408 feet. The visitor center is open daily 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. Last ticket sales at 4:30 p.m.

NATURE TRAIL

This one-mile paved, partially wheelchair 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 high clearance vehicles. Brochures are available at the visitor center information desk. The scenic drive is open 24/7 before sunrise and closes 1/2 hour after sunset. These hours are subject to change.

RATTLESNAKE SPRINGS

This historic oasis includes a picnic area, shade trees, restrooms and excellent bird watching. Located 4.5 miles south of White’s City on Highway 62/80, then 2.5 miles west on County Road 408. Day use only.

HIKING & CAMPING

The park’s wilderness offers day hikes and backcountry camping (permit required). Rangers at the visitor center can provide free permits, trail and weather information, and backcountry camping tips. The bookstore sells topographic maps, which are considered essential for desert hiking.

To book a tour, call 575-785-2232 or visit www.nps.gov/cave.

Audio Guide Rental

Enhance your visit with an audio guide rental. As you tour the caverns, you will learn about the natural and cultural history of Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

Audio guide rentals are administered by Western National Parks Association (WNPA), a non-profit organization. The cost is $5.00.
Carlsbad Caverns National Park

FOR TOUR RESERVATIONS CALL 877-444-6777 OR TDD 1-877-833-6777

TOUR
Tour Date and Times
Adult Fee
Age Limit
Tour Length
Group Size
King’s Palace
Paved Trail; 80 foot hill must be climbed on return trip
Due to repairs to the elevators that are underway at the time of printing, visit www.nps.gov/tave for dates and times for all tours, or call 575-785-2332.
$8
4
1 1/2 hours
55
Left Hand Tunnel
Uneven dirt trail and slippery slopes
Meet at the Underground Fest Area
$7.00 and General Admission Ticket ($3.50 ages 6-15, Senior Pass, and Access Pass holders)
6
2 hours
15
Lower Cave
Must negotiate fifty feet of ladders, low light, and slippery, dirt trails. Might get dirty.
Meet at the visitor center
$20.00 and General Admission Ticket ($10.00 ages 12-15, Senior Pass, and Access Pass holders)
12
3 hours
12
Slaughter Canyon Cave
Strenuous climb required to reach cave entrance. Trail in cave is slippery, uneven and rocky.
Meet at the visitor center
$15.00
($7.50 ages 8-15, Senior Pass, and Access Pass holders)
8
5 1/2 hours
20

To protect the bats, all electronic devices like cameras, cell phones, and camcorders are prohibited at the Bat Flight Program. This rule is strictly enforced.

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL: THE NATIONAL PARKS & FEDERAL RECREATIONAL LANDS PASS

ANNUAL PASS
The annual pass sells for $80.00 and is good for one year from date of purchase. The pass covers entrance fees at National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife sites and standard amenity fees at Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Forest Service sites. The pass can be purchased at federal recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.

ANNUAL PASS—MILITARY
The Military annual pass is free to U.S. Military members with a current CAC card, and their dependents with ID card Form 1793. The card is good for one year from the date it is obtained. The pass covers entrance fees at National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife sites and standard amenity fees at Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Forest Service sites. The pass can be obtained at federal recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.

SENIOR PASSES
Any U.S. citizen or permanent resident of the United States 62 years or older may purchase the Annual Senior Pass or Lifetime Senior Pass.

It covers the entrance fees to National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife sites and standard amenity fees at Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Forest Service Sites. Some camping and guided tour fees are discounted 50% for cardholders. The pass can be purchased at federal recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.

You can now purchase a $80 Annual Senior Pass. The Annual Pass is good for one full year from the date of purchase. You can also purchase a $85 Lifetime Senior Pass. The Lifetime Pass does not need to be renewed.

A Lifetime Senior Pass can be purchased anytime for $85. Four Annual Senior Passes may be exchanged for a free Lifetime Senior Pass.

ACCESS PASS
The Access Pass is available for free to any U.S. citizen or permanent resident of any age that has been medically determined to have a permanent disability.

The Access Pass covers the entrance fees to National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife sites and standard amenity fees at Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Forest Service Sites. Some camping and guided tour fees are discounted 50% for cardholders. The free pass can be obtained upon signing a medical affidavit at federal recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees.

GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK ANNUAL PASS
Guadalupe Mountains National Park offers an annual pass for $20.00 for visitors who plan on visiting the park more than once a year, but may not visit other federal fee areas.

The pass covers entrance fees and is good for 3 individuals plus the cardholder (persons 15 years and younger are free with or without the Guadalupe Mountains NP Annual Pass). The pass is available for purchase at the park at the Pine Springs Visitor Center.

EVERY KID IN A PARK (EKIP) PASSES
Any 4th grader who is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident (or 10 year-old for those who are in alternative school environments) may complete the education material on the Every Kid in a Park website (www.everykidinapark.gov) to obtain a free EKIP pass. It is available to U.S. 4th graders (including home-schooled and free-choice learners 10 years of age) who present a valid

EKIP paper pass, and is valid for the duration of the 4th grade school year through the following summer (September -August).

These passes are honored nationwide at Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and US Fish & Wildlife Service sites charging entrance or standard amenity fees.

They admit the pass holder and any accompanying passengers in a private non-commercial vehicle. At per-person fee sites, they admit

the pass holder and up to 3 people who are 16 and older (for a maximum of four people). Anyone 15 and younger is free of charge.

Paper passes can be obtained by visiting the Every Kid in a Park website (www.everykidinapark.gov). Paper passes should be exchanged for a plastic 4th Grade Pass; however, paper passes are also considered valid passes.

Digital versions of the paper pass (such as on smart phones or tablets) will not be accepted to exchange for an Annual 4th Grade Pass.

Visitor Guide 7
Guadalupe Mountains National Park

SERVICES
Facilities and services within and near Guadalupe Mountains National Park are extremely limited. The nearest gas stations are 43 miles west (Dell City, TX), 35 miles east (White’s City, NM), or 69 miles south (Van Horn, TX). There is no campstore; bring everything you need with you.

INFORMATION & EXHIBITS
Pine Springs Visitor Center
Elevations 5,750’. On Highway 62/62, 35 miles southwest of Carlsbad, 10 miles east of El Paso, and 60 miles north of Van Horn on Highway 54 and Highway 62/62. Open every day except December 25. Open daily 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Mountain Time). Information, natural history exhibits, introductory slide program.

Frijole Ranch History Museum
The ranch house features exhibits describing historic and current use of the Guadalupe Mountains. Grounds include a picnic area near a spring shaded by large oak trees. Open intermittently.

McKittrick Canyon
Highway entrance gate is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time. During Daylight Savings Time, hours are expanded 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Restrooms, outdoor exhibits, slide program, picnic tables.

Hike Safety...
• Stay off trails, don’t cut across switchbacks or create new trails.
• Carry out all trash, including cigarette butts.
• Report any trail hazards to the Pine Springs Visitor Center or any park staff member.
• Collecting of natural, historic or prehistoric objects is prohibited.

Protect the Park...
• Stay on trails, don’t cut across switchbacks or create new trails.
• Carry out all trash, including cigarette butts.
• Report any trail hazards to the Pine Springs Visitor Center or any park staff member.
• Collecting of natural, historic or prehistoric objects is prohibited.

Hiking

Pinery Trail
Distance: 0.6 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 1878. Trailside exhibits. This is the only trail pets on leash are allowed.

McKittrick Canyon Trail
Distance: 4.8 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. Do not drink the water in the wash 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 8,527’ 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.

Pine Springs Campground
Located near the Pine Springs 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 959-828-3521 x242 up to two months in advance. Campers planning on day hiking in McKittrick Canyon, to Guadalupe Peak or the Wolf Trail will want to stay here.

Dog Canyon Campground
Located at the end of New Mexico Highway 157, 70 miles from Carlsbad and 110 miles east of 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 two months in advance by calling 959-828-3521 x244.

Other Popular Hikes...

Trailhead Trail Distance Roundtrip Description
Pine Springs Devil’s Hall Trail 4.2 miles Moderate to Strenuous. Hike in Pine Spring Canyon to the Hiker’s Staircase and Devil’s Hall. After the first mile, the trail drops into the wash and becomes very rocky and uneven. Turn left and follow the canyon bottom to the Hiker’s Staircase and a beyond to the Devil’s Hall. Area beyond Devil’s Hall closed March, August due to sensitive species.

The Bowl 8.5 miles Strenuous. The Bowl shelters a highcountry conifer forest. Recommended route: Tejas Trail, Bovil Trail, Hunter Peak, Bear Canyon Trail, Frijole Trail, Tejas Trail (Irrev) back to campground. Trail climbs 2,500’. Bear Canyon Trail is very rocky and extremely steep.

El Capitán Trail 11.3 miles Strenuous. Moderate to Strenuous. Desert lovers will appreciate the rocky arroyos and open vistas while skirting along the base of El Capitán. Recommended route: El Capitán Trail, Salt Basin Overlook, and return to Pine Springs on the El Capitán Trail.

Frijole Ranch Manzanita Spring 4 miles 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 watching other wildlife are higher here as well.

Smith Spring Loop (entire loop) 2.3 miles Moderate. Scope for birds and elk as you pass Manzanita Spring on the way to the shady oaks of Smith Spring. Trees around Smith Spring include madrones, maples, oaks, chokecherry, and other pines and oaks.

McKittrick Canyon McKitterick Nature Loop 0.9 miles Strenuous. Moderate to Strenuous. Hike to the foothills and learn about the natural history of the Chihuahuan Desert. Trailside exhibits.

Pecann Reef Trail 8.4 miles Strenuous. Moderate. Easy: A stroll around a meadow frequented by a variety of birds and other wildlife. Along the way you will see evidence of recent fires and regrowth.

Indian Meadow Nature Loop 0.6 miles Easy. Enjoy a stroll around a meadow frequented by a variety of birds and other wildlife. Along the way you will see evidence of recent fires and regrowth.

Mariac Overlook 4.6 miles Moderate. Easy. A stroll around a meadow frequented by a variety of birds and other wildlife. Along the way you will see evidence of recent fires and regrowth.

Lost Peak 6.4 miles Moderate. Easy. A stroll around a meadow frequented by a variety of birds and other wildlife. Along the way you will see evidence of recent fires and regrowth.

Salt Basin Dunes (Day Use Only) 3.4 miles Moderate. Easy. A stroll around a meadow frequented by a variety of birds and other wildlife. Along the way you will see evidence of recent fires and regrowth.

Weather

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Temperature</th>
<th>Average Rainfall</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 38°F</td>
<td>0.90”</td>
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<td>Mar 41°F</td>
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<td>Apr 48°F</td>
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<td>Nov 74°F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 57°F</td>
<td>0.75”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average annual precipitation for Pine Springs (1980-2003) 17.4”</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Backpacking

Eighty-five miles of trails lead through forests, canyons, and desert to ten backcountry campgrounds. A free permit is required if you plan to spend a night in the backcountry. Permits are issued at the Pine Springs Visitor Center and to the Dog Canyon Ranger Station.

Horseback Riding
Sixty percent of the park’s trails are open to stock use. A backcountry permit is required for all stock use. These free permits are issued at the Pine Springs Visitor Center and the Dog Canyon Ranger Station. Stock riding is limited to day trips only.

Stock corrals are available at Dog Canyon and near Frijole Ranch. Each has four pens and will accommodate a maximum of 10 animals. Reservations may be made two months in advance by calling 959-828-3521 ext. 2124.
McKittrick Canyon—the most beautiful spot in Texas

McKittrick Canyon is one of the best places to witness the diversity of life found in the Guadalupe Mountains. This is an extremely scenic hike through a canyon that contains a year-round, spring-fed stream. It will introduce hikers to the extremely unique riparian woodland ecosystem. It is especially beautiful in fall when the bigtooth maples are turning various shades of red, orange, and yellow. This normally occurs mid-October to mid-November.

This is a moderate hike with minimal elevation gain. It will take from four to five hours to complete the roundtrip hike, depending on how far up the canyon you choose to go. The hike to Pratt Cabin is a 4.8 mile roundtrip that will take from two to three hours to complete. The hike to the Grotto is a 6.8 mile roundtrip that will take from four to five hours to complete.

The first mile of the hike is open desert, but further in the canyon you will see an increase in the number and type of trees...bigtooth maples, chinkapin oaks, Texas madrones, velvet ash. Some crossings of the creekbed are dry and those that are wet, have stepping stones to help you across. Which crossings are wet versus dry changes from year to year and during the season. Rainfall levels are highest in the summer and lowest in the spring.

Beyond Pratt Cabin, where geologist Wallace Pratt made his summer vacation home, the trail continues through a dense riparian woodland alongside the stream that makes this canyon unique. The Grotto provides a beautiful spot to have a picnic lunch alongside the stream. Several old historic stone tables and benches make it a comfortable spot to take a rest break. Just a short walk beyond the Grotto is the historic Hunter Line Cabin.

Hikers will also have the option of continuing a bit further beyond the Grotto to the Notch. Beyond the Grotto, the trail begins to climb in elevation, getting quite steep below the Notch. The Notch is approximately 1.5 miles beyond the Grotto with an additional elevation gain of 800 feet. The Notch provides fantastic views of South McKittrick Canyon.

The stone-roofed Pratt Cabin is the perfect place for a rest and a picnic.
By Sherri Ramseyer

Guadalupe Mountains National Park is not just the highest peaks, mountains, desert, and trees. It has a history of occupation, exploration, and settlement that started thousands of years ago. One of the driving forces behind the development and settlement of the West was the Butterfield Overland Stage Route. It was initiated to enable travel across the continent and to connect the East coast with the West coast with a way to exchange information. The trials and tribulations of this precursor of the Pony Express were many.

“Remember boys, nothing on God’s earth must stop the United States mail!” John Butterfield gave his employees these last instructions before September 16, 1858, when Butterfield personally loaded the first bag of mail onto a beautiful, new Concord Stagecoach. He handed the bags to his son, John Jr., who was the first driver of the westbound stage from Tipton, Missouri to San Francisco, with El Paso (then called Franklin), being the midway point.

The conductor cried, “All aboard,” blew his coach horn, and the first westbound coach was on its way at 6:15 pm, just a few minutes late. The eastbound stage left San Francisco more than 24 hours ahead of schedule.

John Butterfield was born in 1801 in Albany County, New York. He had a love for horses and coaches, even as a young man. His first job was as a driver and runner for a coach firm where he was to lure passengers away from the competition. He soon became well-known and well-regarded throughout New England as a great runner and driver. Butterfield saved his money and soon was able to purchase his own horse and a two-seated carriage that he used for his own livery service business. He and his wife Malinda Harriet Baker invested in a boarding house along with his thriving livery service. Butterfield soon became owner of controlling interest in several stage lines.

California’s population was growing by leaps and bounds because of the gold rush in Sac-ramento in 1848. By 1853, the estimated new arrivals to California was 990,000. There was an increased need for a better mail delivery system. The one in place back then was a semi-monthly steamer service between New York and California by way of the Isthmus of Pan- ama. The trip averaged about 3½ to 4½ weeks by steamer. There was a land route between Sacramento and Salt Lake City where it con-nected with another carrier to Independence, MO, but that one took 2 months and had no room for passengers.

In 1856, Aaron Brown was appointed post master general. He advertised for bids on a new overland mail route. Nine proposals were received; three of those were from John Butterfield all for central routes. One proposal was from James Birch for a more southern route from Memphis to San Francisco. The northernizers favored the northern route and the southernizers favored the southern route, so much so that the Chiricahua Indians attacked them out then rather than three years later when John F. Sumter was fired upon.

James Birch was awarded the bid for the south-ern route which was nicknamed the “Oo-Row Route” because it was not a direct route to San Francisco. Instead, it was a big bow to the south. The southern route was preferred because it would avoid the Rocky Mountains and much snow in the winter. Birch made sure the first delivery was on its way from the west and then he boarded the steamer on August 20th headed for Panama. Passengers from the steamer were transferred to the Panama railroad for the four hour trip across the isthmus. Then they boarded the luxurious steamer in Central America for the long trip to New York.

The ship got caught in a storm by the South Carolina coast and went down. Four hundred passengers and crew were lost, including James Birch.

After James Birch’s death, a new contract was awarded for the southern route to John But-terfield, even though he had only bid on central routes. The contract was for $600,000 a year with the stipulation that the route had to be run from St. Louis to San Francisco in 21 days, semi-weekly. The Butterfield Overland Stage was the longest in the world, over 2,800 miles. A branch line came from Memphis, Tennessee and met at Fort Smith, Arkansas to go on to San Francisco. At the beginning of the route, fares for the eastbound passengers were $100, for people going west, $200. Later the fares were changed to $50 both ways.

Many editors in the newspapers thought that the proposed schedule could not be kept. “Human ingenuity cannot devise a plan for such an unheard of achievement… it never has been done. It never will be done.” Despite protests, John Butterfield started building his stage line. It’s no wonder more people doubted that the route would be on schedule. Butterfield had just one year to get the line ready to go and it was a monumental task—almost half of the 2,800 route was in wildness! The whole route had to be surveyed, some roads needed improvement, and some roads had to be built. Bridges had to be built over streams. Two hundred stations had to be built, stocked with food and equipment for repairs, wells had to be dug, and water had to be brought in where wells were not possible. Butterfield spent one million dollars in preparing the line for opera-tion, buying 1,000 horses, 500 mules, 800 sets of harnesses, 900 coaches and utility wagons.

Then people had to be hired to drive the coaches, to man the stations, to have meals ready for passengers, and to have teams of horses or mules ready for hitching up to the coaches. Most of the stations were about 20 miles apart. While some stations were meal stations, all were “change” stations where they could get a fresh team of horses or mules. About every 300 miles, a new coach was sup-plied. Concord coaches and Celerity wagons were the main vehicles used on the route and were on the move both day and night. Most passengers had trouble sleeping the first couple of nights, but after that, they would sleep from sheer exhaustion.

Two meals a day were served at an extra cost to the passengers and could come at any time of the day or night, so the passengers were en-couraged to bring their own food. Passengers never knew if they were getting breakfast or dinner, but it really didn’t matter because most of the meals were similar; beans, jerky, hard tack, and black coffee. Once in a while, some of the stations would have vegetables, eggs, milk, and honey, but those were few and far between.

Waterman Lilly Ormsby, a special correspon-dent of the New York Herald from September 26 to November 19, 1858, was the first and only through passenger on the first west-bound stage. His accounts of the first Butterfield Over-land Mail Route were informative and sometimes amusing.

“We now came to a patch of woods through which the road was tortuous and stormy, but our driver’s ambition to make good time overcame his caution, and away we went, bounding over the stones at a furious rate. The moon shone brightly, but its light was obstructed by the trees, and the driver had to rely only on his knowledge of the road for a guide. To see the heavy mail wagon whizzing and whirling over the jagged rocks through such a labyrinth, in comparative dark-ness, was a scene to feel amidst—now on the hard seat, now against the roof, and now against the side of the wagon—was no joke, I assure you, though I can truthfully say that I rather liked the excitement of the thing. But it was too dangerous to be continued without accident, and soon two heavy thumps and a bound of the wagon that unseated all, and a crashing sound, denoted that something had broken.” It turned out to be the tongue of the wagons and at the next station it was fixed, but it took more time to fix it than the time the driver saved at going fast. Moral: “Make haste slowly!”

At one stop, there was a delay in changing the teams because the wild mules had to be caught and harnessed. Several hours of their advanced time was lost. Ormsby wrote that when they got underway, “the mules reared, pitched, twisted, whipped, wheeled, ran, stood still, and cut up all sorts of capers. The wagon performed so many revolutions, that I, in fear for my life, abandoned it and took to my heels, fully confident that I could make more progress in a straight line, with much less risk of breaking my neck.”

The threat of Indian attacks was always present on the stage routes. Ormsby noted that on a 40 mile stretch through barren plains with clumps of scrub oak, weeds, and grass, the only out-of-the-ordinary thing was a Comanche woman riding “straddle” and cows taking care of themselves. Although the Indians didn’t at-tack the stage on this first trip, the drivers were always aware that they were being watched from the top of the mountains and behind the rocks. More often the Indians would attack the stations, taking stock and food and killing the people at the stations. More than 50 em-ployees were killed, hundreds of animals sto-len, and many stations looted and burned by Indians. The ruins of the Pirney Station here in the Guadalupe Mountains were reportedly burned by Mescalero Apaches in 1880.

The Civil War and removal of the troops from the forts as well as the confiscation of the Overland property and stations by the Seccessionists put an end to the great Butterfield Overland Mail in March of 1861. Stock, coaches, and equipment were transferred to the Central Route ran by Wells Fargo who Butterfield owed money to.

The Butterfield Overland Mail Route, the precursor to the Pony Express and the transconti-nental railroad, was the driving force for settle-ment and development of the West. The Pirney has the designation of being the only ruin of an original company built Butterfield Station standing on the route in close proxim-ity to a national highway. The Pirney is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Traces of the Butterfield Overland Mail Route and the ruins of one of its stations are still evident in the park.

HintsinforPlainsTravelers

Don’t swamp a strong pipe inside, especially in the morning.

Spit on the leeward side of the coach.

Don’t swear nor lop over on your neighbor when sleeping.

Never attempt to fire a gun or pistol while on the road, it may frighten the team.

Don’t discuss politics or religion nor point out places on the road where horrible murders have been committed, if delicate women are among the passengers.

Don’t грowl at the food at the stations, stage companies generally provide the best they can get.

Don’t grease your hair before starting or dust will stick there in sufficient quantities to make a respectable “taper patch.”
DO YOU LIKE A CHALLENGE AND TO travel where you rely on your own wits and physical strength to climb and negotiate through cave passages? For folks who really enjoy "wild caving" type of trips, there are many adventures to be found in nearby Lincoln National Forest.

The Lincoln National Forest manages numerous caves, many of which are in the same mountain range associated with two national parks. While nothing can compare to Carlsbad Caverns, many Forest Service caves are spectacular, unique, and world renowned for exquisite formations. In addition, many caves have vertical entrances requiring ropes and rope work to enter! New discoveries are made yearly as scientists come to the Lincoln to study the geology and biology of caves. The caves are in a completely natural setting nestled in the high mountains and deep canyons. Visiting caves in the Lincoln National Forest can be challenging and remote, requiring specialized equipment, weeks of planning, and extensive training.

Below ground, management of backcountry caves is very similar for the different agencies. That is because the same 1988 Cave Protection Act is the federal law that requires management of significant caves for all national parks and National Forests. Lincoln National Forest promotes conservation by facilitating a backcountry cave permit system, and by coordinating significant caves for all national parks.

Visiting caves in the Lincoln National Forest can be challenging and remote, requiring specialized equipment, weeks of planning, and extensive training.

Wildlife Conservation Opportunities in the Lincoln National Forest

By Brad Bolton

The Guadalupe Mountains National Park, the southern-most district of the Lincoln National Forest, has many spectacular recreation opportunities. Remote, quiet and mysterious, the district beckons the visitor to explore this unique desert landscape. The Guadalupe Ranger District shares its southern boundary with two national parks; Guadalupe Mountains National Park and Carlsbad Caverns. Hiking, camping, hunting, bird watching, and horseback riding are just some of the incredible activities that can be enjoyed on the district. One of the recreational highlights is Sitting Bull Falls Recreation Area. It sits at the end of a long remote canyon and has a series of waterfalls (fed from springs atop the canyon) that create a large pool of water at the base of the falls, which is 10 feet from top to bottom. The Sitting Bull Falls Recreation Area meets ADA guidelines for accessibility and some of the features include paved sidewalks, restrooms, picnic tables, rock cabins, fresh water, trash containers, and a viewing deck of the waterfall.

Sitting Bull Falls and the surrounding landscape are the remains of an ancient reef, known as Captain Reef. Approximately 260 million years ago the area was on the edge of a huge inland sea. The predominant geology of the area is limestone and is full of fissures and caves that were slowly eroded by acidic water over long periods of time. Also, deep and rough canyons have been carved by annual flooding and rains. Other geologic forces have created picturesque valleys teeming with wildlife and those forces, over time, helped create the underground water reservoirs and springs that feed into Sitting Bull Falls.

Imagine starting out on a caving trip to Lincoln National Forest, things can be very different. Like many National Forests, primitive roads provide driving access into some very remote areas. These roads can be extremely rough and many folks opt to get out and hike along the beautiful ridgtops. Primitive camping is allowed almost everywhere and car camping is allowed within 300 of most roads. After finding the perfect campsite, high in the Guadalupe Mountains, the next task is actually finding the caves themselves. There are no established trails that take visitors to wild caves so finding the cave entrance can be an extensive search along the side of a steep canyon, with the added challenges of orienteering and following maps. To help groups find caves and promote conservation, Lincoln National Forest facilitates a public trip leader program. Members of the National Speleological Society (NSS) with extensive cave experience lead others to find new adventures.

If "wild caving" sounds like fun, there is an easy way to get started and it starts right where you live. There are caving clubs called "Grottos" located across the country as part of the National Speleological Society or NSS. Finding and contacting one of these Grottos is a quick away at www.caves.org. There you will find a U.S. map and contact information for caving enthusiasts from across the country. The National Speleological Society is a great partner organization and NSS Grottos provide the necessary training and education needed for visiting the backcountry caves of Lincoln National Forest.

Sitting Bull Falls (Lincoln National Forest)

By Jeremy Evans

The Guadalupe Mountains sit on the northern edge of the Chihuahuan Desert and has a rich and diverse geologic and archaeological history. American Indians first came into the area around 10,000 years ago and the Mescalero Apache called the area their home for many, many years. Then Spanish explorers came to the area around the 1500s, bringing horses, which proved to be very valuable to the Apache. By the mid-1800s explorers, settlers, ranchers, businessmen, cattleman, and outlaw laws had migrated into the area. Because of the rough and remote terrain, the Guadalupe Mountains were settled very slowly.

In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps was assigned to the area and built impressive stone structures that still stand today as the picnic sites at Sitting Bull Falls. The 1970s ushered in a little more development, crews installed vault restrooms, added more cabanas and improved the trail to the falls. In the 1980s a route to the top of the falls was built by the Youth Conservation Corps. Then on Easter Sunday of 2001 the Last Chance Fire burned through the area, severely damaging the picnic cabanas and destroying the trees and vegetation. Sitting Bull Falls was closed for a year while repairs were made and then reopened only to be damaged again by a flood event in September of 2011. Again in 2014 another flood delayed re-construction efforts. Finally, by May of 2015, all reconstruction and repairs were completed. A new walkway was built to the falls which leads to a viewing deck with a bird's-eye view of the falls! The entrance road to the well-known site was also reconstructed and literally "re-paved" the way to a whole new experience.

Come and enjoy Sitting Bull Falls and the surrounding area. Take a hike on the many trails or relax and have a picnic with your family. Whatever you decide to do, your adventure to the Guadalupe Ranger District will be memorable.

Don't forget to come prepared. Bring plenty of water and pay attention! Deer, javelina, mountain lions, snakes, tarantulas, rabbits, and many other animal species call the area home. If you decide to go out and explore the backcountry, please go prepared, the weather in this area can be unpredictable and so can the wildlife! Please be safe and enjoy YOUR National Forest.

It is a day-use area and is open from 9 - 5 daily from October to March and 8:30 - 6 from April to September; the standard amenity fee is a bargain at $5 per vehicle. Visitors can wade in the water below the falls, hike, or picnic. The picnic sites have tables and grills, but you'll need to bring your own charcoal and also be aware of any fire danger warnings. Many of the picnic sites provide overhead shelter from the sun's rays that bear down on the area most of the day. Fresh water and restroom facilities are available. There is a paved, ADA accessible trail to the falls viewing area. Camping is not allowed in the falls day use area, but is allowed almost anywhere else on the Guadalupe Ranger District.

If you have questions, please visit the Guadalupe Ranger District office located at 5205 Buena Vista Drive in Carlsbad, or call 575-885-4981.

Sitting Bull Falls is approximately 42 miles west of Carlsbad, New Mexico and can be reached by car via Highway 285 to Highway 135, and then onto Forest Road 216 / County Road 409. Pets on leashes are allowed.
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.

The park is located high atop the Ocotillo Hills overlooking the northwest edge of Carlsbad, just off U.S. Highway 85, and features exhibits, an art gallery, gift shop, and refreshments.

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

Fees
Day Use Only—$5.00 per vehicle
Camping—$14.00 per night ($10.00 for each additional vehicle driven into the same site)
Primitive Camping Area—$8.00 per vehicle per night.

BRANTLEY LAKE STATE PARK
575-457-2384
www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SPD/brantley-lakestatepark.html
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, restroom with hot showers, shelters, 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 ($10.00 for each additional vehicle driven into the same site)
Primitive Camping Area—$8.00 per vehicle per night.

La Cueva Non-Motorized Trail System
The trail system covers approximately 2,200 acres and contains more than 15 miles of maintained trails. The non-motorized trails are used by mountain bikers, hikers, and equestrians. The trails wind through the rolling limestone foothills of the Guadalupe Mountains and the rugged Chihuahuan Desert environment.

Open daily except December 25. Wheelchair accessible.

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

Salt Basin Dunes Picnic Area & Trailhead
(No Water)

Guadalupe Mountains National Park