Planning Your Fall Visit

The park entrance fee has increased from $10 to $15 per vehicle. It is still good for seven days. The cost of a Joshua Tree annual pass also increased by $5, to $30. If you plan to visit several parks during the next 12 months, the National Parks Pass, at $50, is a good bargain.

The park is happy to announce the opening of a new visitor center on Park Boulevard in the village of Joshua Tree. The Joshua Tree Visitor Center is open every day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to accommodate those visitors entering the park through the West Entrance.

Ranger-guided walks, talks, and evening programs are a good way to increase your appreciation of the plants, animals, and natural and cultural features of Joshua Tree National Park. Weekly schedules are available at entrance stations and visitor centers and are posted on campground bulletin boards. We also post them on our website: www.nps.gov/jotr.

When we hear “desert,” we often think “hot.” That is not always the case however. Joshua Tree’s fall and winter temperatures can be quite chilly, especially after the sun sets or on a windy day. So don’t forget to bring your jacket, even for a day trip. And, if you will be attending an evening program or camping, you will want to have additional warm clothing to layer on, including gloves and a hat. A graph of the average monthly temperatures is located on page nine.

Kids, stop at an entrance station or visitor center and pick up a Junior Ranger booklet. Complete the activities inside and return it to a ranger at an entrance station or visitor center. When you’ve finished, you’ll receive a Joshua Tree Junior Ranger badge.
accessibility
The nature trails at Bajada, Cap Rock, and the Oasis of Mara are accessible. Keys View is accessible and Site 122 at Jumbo Rocks Campground is wheelchair accessible.

all terrain vehicles
ATVs may not be used in the park.

bicycling
Bicycling is permitted on public roads, both paved and dirt, but not on trails. There are no bicycle paths and many roads are narrow, so ride cautiously.

campfires
Campfires are permitted in campgrounds and in picnic areas where fire grates are provided. Campfires are not allowed in the backcountry. Collecting vegetation, living or dead, is prohibited, so bring firewood.

chemical toilets
Toilet facilities are available in all campgrounds.

climate
Days are typically clear with less than 25 percent humidity. Temperatures are most comfortable in the spring and fall, with an average high/low of 85°F and 50°F respectively. Winter brings cooler nights, around 60°F, and freezing nights. It occasionally snows at higher elevations. Summers are hot, over—some areas well over—100°F during the day and nights, around 60°F, and freezing nights. Rainfall is unpredictable and variable, with an average of about 5 inches per year.

commercial filming
When filming or photography involves advertising a product or service, the use of models, sets, props, or the use of a restricted site, a film permit is required.

day-use and restricted areas
Some areas within the park are privately owned; others protect wildlife or historical sites. Entering these areas is prohibited. Day-use areas are set aside to protect sensitive populations of wildlife. They are closed from dusk to dawn.

dehydration
It is easy to become dehydrated in arid desert environments. Even if you only plan to drive through the park, you should have some water with you. If you are going to camp, we recommend one gallon of water per person per day. If you are going to be hiking or biking, you will want to take along two gallons per person. Drink the water and do not economize. When the water is half gone, it is time to turn back.

discharging wastes
Discharging wastes is prohibited. Water supplies are altered or obliterated. Joint local chambers of commerce for information. Their telephone numbers and web addresses are listed on page six of this publication.

food, lodging, services
There are no concessions within the park. However, surrounding communities can fulfill most visitor needs. Contact local chambers of commerce for information. Their telephone numbers and web addresses are listed on page six of this publication.

food storage
Store food in hard-sided containers or in your vehicle to prevent ravens, coyotes, and other wildlife from eating it.

getting to the park
The park is located about 140 miles east of Los Angeles via I-10. Entrances to the park are located off CA HWY 62 (Twentynine Palms Highway), at the towns of Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms. A third entrance is located about 25 miles east of Indio off I-10.

horses
Horseback riding is a popular way to experience the park. Because of the special requirements for stock in desert areas, you will want to request the publication on horse use before you come.

international visitors
Park information is available at visitor centers and entrance stations in Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

keep wildlife wild
Feeding coyotes, squirrels, and other animals weans them from their natural food supplies, causes overpopulation, and turns them into aggressive creatures as they lose their fear of humans.

leave no trace
During your visit please pick up trash around campgrounds and trails. Your actions will inspire other park visitors.

lost & found
Report lost, and turn in found, items at any visitor center or ranger station. Lost articles will be returned if found.

off-road driving
Vehicles, including bicycles, are prohibited off established roads. The desert ecosystem is fragile. Off-road driving and riding creates ruts, upsets delicate drainage patterns, compacts the soil, and leaves visual scars for years. Plants are crushed and uprooted. Wildlife shelters are destroyed, and food and water supplies are altered or obliterated.

overnight parking
There is no overnight parking in the park, at visitor centers, or park headquarters. Unattended vehicles may not be parked outside of campgrounds and backcountry by roads between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

parking
Park roads, even the paved roads, are narrow, winding, and have soft, sandy shoulders. Accidents occur when visitors stop along the road to admire a view or make a picture. There are many pullouts and parking lots, so wait until you get to one before stopping.

pets
While pets are allowed in the park, their activities are restricted. They must be on a leash at all times and cannot be more than 100 feet from a road, picnic area, or campground; they are prohibited from trails, and they must never be left unattended—not even in a vehicle.

potable water
Water is available at the visitor center in Twentynine Palms, at Black Rock and Cottonwood campgrounds, at the entrance station south of Joshua Tree, and at the Indian Cove ranger station.

rock climbing
Climbers may replace existing unsafe bolts, and new bolts may be placed in non-wilderness areas using the bolting checklist. Bolting in wilderness requires a permit. Bolting checklists and permit applications are available at entrance stations and visitor centers.

stay out and stay alive
Mining was an important activity in this area and numerous mining sites can be found within the park. If you choose to visit them, use extreme caution and do not enter old mine workings.

take only pictures
Over 1.25 million people visit Joshua Tree National Park each year. If each visitor took only one rock or one branch from a bush, the park, our national heritage, would soon be gone. Removal, disturbance, destruction, or disfigurement of anything in the park is unlawful.

trash
Our dry desert climate cannot quickly decompose such things as orange peels, apple cores, egg shells, and other picnic remains. Loose paper blows into bushes creating an unsightly mess, and plastic six-pack rings can strangle wildlife. Dispose of your trash in a responsible manner and recycle whatever you can.

vehicle laws
Park roads are narrow and winding. Some areas are congested. Speed limits are there for your safety and well-being. State and federal vehicle laws apply within the park.

visitor activities
Ranger-led programs are offered on the weekends from mid-October through mid-December and from mid-February through May. Check at visitor centers, at entrance stations, and on campground bulletin boards for a current schedule.

visitor centers
The Oasis Visitor Center is located in Twentynine Palms and is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Joshua Tree Visitor Center, located in Joshua Tree Village, is also open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Cottonwood Visitor Center serves the southern entrance to the park and is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Black Rock Nature Center, located in Black Rock Campground, is open October through May.

wildflowers
Spring blooming periods vary with elevation, temperature, and the amount of moisture in the soil. You can get current information on the park website: www.nps.gov/jotr.

wildlife viewing
It is a thrill to see wild animals in the park, but remember: this is their home and they should not be disturbed. This includes the use of artificial light for viewing them.

world wide web
If you are "connected," check out the National Park Service publications on the web at www.nps.gov. We are adding more information all the time.

you are responsible
You are responsible for knowing and obeying park rules. Check at visitor centers, at entrance stations, on bulletin boards, and on the park website: www.nps.gov/jotr to find out what they are. When in doubt, ask a ranger.
Tarantulas

Family Theraphosidae
Genus & Species Aphonopelma chaleodes

Description body 2 to 3 inches; 4 inch legs; color is brown to black; covered with thousands of fine hairs. Besides its eight legs, the basic sections of a tarantula’s body are its cephalothorax (a fused head and thorax, or chest) and its abdomen. It also has eight closely set eyes.

Food insects like beetles and grasshoppers, small lizards and mice; Tarantulas chase down their prey rather than snaring it in webs. Sensitive hairs on the spider’s body allow it to detect subtle movements in its immediate environment and “home in” on a victim.

Life History mates in fall; litter size is 500 to 1000; females may live 20 years or more; males may be eaten during mating; solitary; living one to a burrow

Habitat Joshua tree forest; creosote scrub

Activity When cornered by a predator, the tarantula will rub its hind legs over its abdomen, brushing hairs into its enemy’s eyes.

Status common

Where to look Oasis of Mara, Split Rock, Wilson Canyon

Notes These shy giants are reluctant to attack humans and their venom is no worse than a bee sting.

Although most birds require drinking water almost every day, this is not such a limiting factor as might be supposed. There are many springs and seeps in the park, which are readily accessible to animals that can fly to them. The chief limiting factor for birds in the desert is food. Birds require relatively large amounts of food daily, especially during the breeding season. Thus, it is not surprising that there are only 78 species of birds known to nest and raise young in the park.

The park is an attractive place to sight and watch birds. The lack of dense vegetation makes birds much easier to see here than in most national parks. Golden eagles hunt in the park regularly. The roadrunner, of cartoon fame, is an easily recognized resident. And the call of Gambel's quail is a noteworthy sound of the desert.

Monthly birdwatching programs are given at Black Rock Canyon and at Cottonwood Spring. They are listed on the weekly ranger program schedules available at entrance stations, visitor centers, and on campground bulletin boards.

Visit Keys Ranch on a ranger-guided walking tour

One of the park’s most popular historic sites is the Desert Queen Ranch, known locally as Keys Ranch, after longtime park resident William “Bill” Keys. Originally an immigrant from Russia, Bill Keys arrived in the Joshua Tree area in 1910. He served for a while as the hired caretaker and assayer of the Desert Queen Mine. Eventually, he acquired the mine and a five-acre mill site as payment for back wages. He homesteaded additional acres and named his place the Desert Queen Ranch. Miner, rancher, farmer, engineer, handyman, and desert survivor, Bill Keys, along with his wife Frances, created a life and educated his children in this remote desert canyon.

Bill led a colorful life and is famous as the survivor of a gun battle with Worth Bagley over a disputed right-of-way. He also had small parts in two Disney films, Chico, the Misunderstood Coyote (1960), and Wild Burro of the Desert (1961).

Over the years, the ranch grew into a rambling collection of buildings, cabins, sheds, mining equipment, old cars, and the remarkable assortment of odds and ends needed to support Keys’ many endeavors at his isolated desert homestead. Following Keys’ death, the Desert Queen Ranch was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The public may visit the ranch on ranger-guided tours that last 90 minutes. They are offered daily at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Tickets for adults and children 12 years and over cost $5.00. Tickets for children 6 to 11 are $2.50, and children under six are free. Golden Age and Golden Access Passport holders will pay $2.50.

Tickets can be purchased in advance by calling the park reservation office at 760-367-5555. Reservation are accepted Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Tour tickets can also be purchased in person at the Oasis Visitor Center in Twentynine Palms from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is recommended that you call ahead to ensure that tickets are available for your preferred date and time.

Tour fees are used to support the Desert Queen Ranch tour program and to restore, maintain, and preserve the historic character of the ranch property.

Winter Birds

With over 250 kinds of birds recorded from Joshua Tree National Park, it is understandable that the park affords a rewarding place to observe them. This is especially true during the winter months when migrants abound.

The vast majority of our recorded bird species are either migrants or transients. Lying astride the inland portion of the Pacific flyway, the park serves as a rest stop for many migrants. The aquatic areas of Barker Dam and the Desert Queen Ranch attract waterfowl on their way to the Salton Sea, birds that would not otherwise be seen in the desert. Rest stops are important for most migratory birds for purposes of water intake and for metabolism of fat reserves, which may not keep pace with energy use while they are actually in flight. Many of our migrants are actually residents of the nearby mountains, from which they fly to escape the heavy winter snows.
Joshua Tree National Park offers visitors endless opportunities for exploration and discovery. Depending on the number of hours you have to spend, your interests and energy, here are some ideas to consider:

IF YOU HAVE FOUR HOURS OR LESS, begin your tour at a park visitor center. Park staff will be happy to provide you with current information about conditions in the park as well as answers to your questions.

With limited time you may want to confine your sightseeing to the main park roads. Many pullouts with wayside exhibits dot these roads. A list of nature trails and short walks appears in this publication. Consider experiencing at least one of these walks during a short park visit.

On clear days the vista from Keys View extends beyond Salton Sea to Mexico and is well worth the additional 20-minute drive.

IF YOU PLAN TO SPEND AN ENTIRE DAY, there will be time to walk several nature trails or take a longer hike; several are listed on page 7 of this publication. A ranger-led program will add enjoyment and understanding to your visit. Check at visitor centers and on campground bulletin boards for listings. Or, call ahead and reserve a spot on the popular Keys Ranch guided walking tour.

Some visitors like to experience the desert from the seat of a mountain bike. The park offers an extensive network of dirt roads that make for less crowded and safer cycling than the paved main roads. A selection of road trips is included in the article titled Backcountry Roads in this publication.

Joshua Tree has gained international attention as a superb rock-climbing area. Many visitors enjoy watching the rock climbers in action.

WHAT TO SEE AND DO

Viewed from the road the desert may appear bleak and drab. Closer examination reveals a fascinating variety of plants and animals and surreal geologic features. Joshua Tree National Park offers visitors endless opportunities for exploration and discovery. Depending on the number of hours you have to spend, your interests and energy, here are some ideas to consider:

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WITH MORE THAN ONE DAY IN THE PARK, your options increase. There are nine campgrounds and backcountry camping is permitted. You will find information concerning camping and backcountry use elsewhere in this publication.

Books and topographic maps give information needed for longer hikes. For "peak baggers," the park has ten mountains over 5,000 feet (1,524 m) in elevation. Or make it your goal to hike to all the park oases. Other trails lead you to remnants of the gold mining era, a colorful part of the park's cultural history.

Whatever you choose, your time will be rewarding. The desert holds much more than what is readily apparent to the casual observer. A NOTE OF CAUTION: The desert, fascinating as it is, can be life-threatening for those unfamiliar with its potential dangers. It is essential that you carry water with you—even if you are only driving through. Cars break down; keys get locked inside; accidents happen.

Backcountry Roads

for mountain bikes and 4-wheel drive vehicles

Mountain bikes and 4-wheel drive vehicles are welcome in the park. For your own safety and for the protection of natural features, stay on established roads. Tire tracks on the open desert can last for years and will spoil the wilderness experience of future hikers.

Paved roads in the park are narrow with soft shoulders. Curves, boulder piles, and Joshua trees restrict the vision of bikers and motorists. The unpaved roads in the park are safer for bikes and offer many opportunities to explore the area. Here is a sampling:

Pinkham Canyon Road
This challenging 20-mile (32.4-km) road begins at Cottonwood Visitor Center, travels along Smoke Tree Wash, and then cuts down Pinkham Canyon. Sections of the road run through soft sand and rocky flood plains. The road connects to a service road next to I-10.

Black Eagle Mine Road
Beginning 6.5 miles (10.5 km) north of Cottonwood Visitor Center, this dead-end dirt road runs along the edge of Pinto Basin, crosses several dry washes, and winds through canyons in the Eagle Mountains. The first nine miles (14.5 km) are within the park boundary. Beyond that point is Bureau of Land Management land and a number of side roads. Several old mines are located near these roads. Use extreme caution when exploring old mines.

Old Dale Road
This 23-mile (37.3 km) road starts at the same point as Black Eagle Mine Road. The first 11 miles (17.8 km), cross Pinto Basin, a flat, sandy dry lake bed. Leaving the basin, the road climbs a steep hill, then crosses the park boundary. A number of side roads veer off toward old mines and residences. The main road leads to ca vury 62, 15 miles (24.3 km) east of Twentynine Palms.

Queen Valley Roads
A network of roads, totaling 13.4 miles (21.7 km), crosses this valley of boulder piles and Joshua trees. A bike trip can begin at Hidden Valley or the dirt road opposite Geology Tour Road. Bike racks have been placed in this area so visitors can lock their bikes and go hiking.

Geology Tour Road
An 18-mile motor tour leads through one of the park's most fascinating landscapes. The road turns south from the paved road two miles (3.2 km) west of Jumbo Rocks Campground. There are 16 stops and it takes approximately two hours to make the round trip. The distance from the junction to Squaw Tank is 5.4 miles (8.8 km). This section is mostly downhill but bumpy and sandy. Starting at Squaw Tank, a 6.5-mile (10.7 km) circular route explores Pleasant Valley. A descriptive brochure that highlights each stop is available at the beginning of the road.

Covington Flats
The dirt roads in Covington Flats offer access to some of the park's largest Joshua trees, junipers, and pinyon pines. From Covington Flats picnic area to Eureka Peak is 3.8 miles (6.2 km) one-way. The dirt road is steep near the end, but the top offers views of Palm Springs, the surrounding mountains, and the Morongo Basin. Your trip will be 6.5 miles (10.5 km) longer if you ride or drive over to the backcountry board, a starting point for excellent hiking.
BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING, HIKING, and HORSEBACK RIDING

Joshua Tree National Park is a back-packer's dream with its mild winter climate and interesting rock formations, plants, and wildlife. It embraces 794,000 acres, of which 585,040 acres have been designated wilderness. By observing the guidelines below, your venture into the backcountry should be safe and enjoyable. If you have questions, ask a ranger. It is your responsibility to know and abide by park regulations.

Registering
If you will be out overnight, register at a backcountry board. The map in this publication indicates the location of the twelve backcountry boards. An unregistered vehicle or a vehicle left overnight somewhere other than at a backcountry board is a cause for concern about the safety of the vehicle's occupants. It is also subject to citation and towing.

Hiking
It is easy to get disoriented in the desert: washes and animal trails crisscross the terrain obscuring trails, boulder piles are confusingly similar, and there are not many prominent features by which to guide yourself. Do get yourself a topographic map and compass or GPS unit and learn how to use them before you head out. Cell phones are often not usable inside the park.

Know your limitations and don’t take risks. You should not attempt to climb steep terrain without adequate equipment, conditioning, and training. Accidents can be fatal.

Carry a minimum of one gallon of water per person per day just for drinking, two gallons in hot weather or if you are planning a strenuous trip. You will need additional water for cooking and hygiene. And don’t forget the other essentials: rain protection, a flashlight, a mirror and whistle, a first-aid kit, pencil and paper, a pocket knife, and extra food.

Locating your camp
Your wilderness camp must be located one mile from the road and 500 feet from any trail. Make yourself aware of any day-use areas in the vicinity (they are indicated on the maps at the backcountry boards) and make certain to camp outside their boundaries.

Washes may seem like inviting places to sleep because they are relatively level, but it is important to realize that they got that way because flash floods “bulldozed” the rocks and vegetation out of the way.

Domestic issues
Water sources in the park are not potable and are reserved for wildlife, so you will have to carry in an adequate supply for drinking, cooking, and hygiene. You will want to give some thought to the trade-off between the water required to hydrate dried foods and the heftier weight of canned and fresh foods. If you want to heat something you will need to pack in a stove and fuel as open fires are prohibited in the backcountry.

Bring plastic bags to hold your garbage and pack it out. Buried trash gets dug up by animals and scattered by the wind; it is not a pretty sight. Do bury human waste in “cat” holes six inches deep. Don’t bury your toilet paper; put it in plastic (zip-locks work nicely) and pack it out. Leave no trace, as they say.

Coping with the weather
That old desert sun can damage eyes as well as skin. Wear a hat and sunglasses and use sun-blocking lotion liberally. Temperature changes of 40 degrees within 24 hours are common. Bring a variety of clothes so you can layer on and off as conditions change.

Although rain is relatively rare in the desert, when it does come it can really pour down. Even when it isn’t raining where you are, rain in the mountains can run off so fast as to cause flash floods. Stay alert.

Horseback riding
Horseback riding is a popular way to experience the backcountry and there are 253 miles of equestrian trails that traverse open lands, canyon bottoms, and dry washes. Because of the special requirements for horses, care should be taken in planning your trip. You may call 760-367-5500 and request that additional information be mailed to you.

Black Rock Canyon Offers Good Hiking and More

Located in the northwest corner of the park, the road to Black Rock Canyon dead-ends at the campground. Campsites are located on a hillside at the mouth of the canyon surrounded by Joshua trees, junipers, cholla cacti, and a variety of desert shrubs. Spring blooms usually begin with the Joshua trees in late February followed by shrubs and annuals.

The hills behind the campground offer a variety of hiking trails including the Hi-View Nature Trail. The interpretive guide for this trail, available at the nature center, identifies the vegetation along this scenic 1.3-mile walk. For those looking for longer trails, Eureka Peak, Panorama Loop, and Warren Peak take hikers to ridge lines overlooking the often snowy peaks of San Jacinto and San Gorgonio. The trailhead for a 33-mile section of the California Riding and Hiking Trail is located at Black Rock. Backpackers can register at the backcountry board here for overnight wilderness trips.

But you don’t have to hike to enjoy the Black Rock Canyon area. Wildlife sightings are frequent in the campground. Visitors often encounter ground squirrels, jackrabbits, and cottontails. Frequent bird sightings include cactus wrens, Gambel’s quail, great horned owls, scrub-jays, and roadrunners. A lucky birder might be rewarded with a glimpse of a Scott’s oriole, pinyon jay, or LeConte’s thrasher. More elusive species such as bobcat, big horn sheep, mountain lions, desert tortoises, and mule deer have all been seen in the area. As the sun sets, listen for the “singing” of coyotes living on the outskirts of the campground.

Please do not feed wild animals in Joshua Tree National Park. People food is unhealthy for them and they could become aggressive and harm you.

Keep Wildlife Wild

Don’t feed coyotes!
People food is not healthy for them. It makes them into beggars, and they might bite you. Also, it is against the law, and a ranger will give you a ticket, then you will have to pay a big fine!

by Junior Ranger Sarah

Joshua Tree Guide 5
**Hiking Trails**

**Trail** | **Round-Trip Mileage** | **Time** | **Starting Point** | **Trail Description**
---|---|---|---|---
Boy Scott Trail | 16 miles | 1-2 days | Indian Cove backcountry board, Cottonwood Visitor Center | Scenic trail through the western most edge of the Wonderland of Rocks. See backcountry board for information on overnight use. Moderate.

**Lost Horse Mine Mt.**

| **Lost Horse Mine Mt.** | **Mileage** | **Time** | **Starting Point** | **Trail Description**
---|---|---|---|---
| 4 miles | 3-4 hours | Parking area 1.2 miles east of Keys View Road | Several stands of fan palms, evidence of past fires, and pools of water are found at the oasis. The plants in this area are especially fragile, so walk lightly. Moderately strenuous.
| 7.2 miles | 4-6 hours | Parking area 1.2 miles east of Keys View Road | Several stands of fan palms, evidence of past fires, and pools of water are found at the oasis. The plants in this area are especially fragile, so walk lightly. Moderately strenuous.

**Mountain Peak**

| **Mountain Peak** | **Mileage** | **Time** | **Starting Point** | **Trail Description**
---|---|---|---|---
| 3 miles | 2-3 hours | Cottonwood Spring or Cottonwood Campground | Excellent views of the Eagle Mountains and Salton Sea. Summit elevation: 2527 feet (770 m). Moderately strenuous.
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**Ryan Mountain**

| **Ryan Mountain** | **Mileage** | **Time** | **Starting Point** | **Trail Description**
---|---|---|---|---
| 3 miles | 2-3 hours | Ryan Mountain parking area or Sheep Pass Campground | Excellent views of Lost Horse, Queas, and Peaunut Valley. Summit elevation: 4543 feet (1384 m). Moderately strenuous.

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**Nature Trails**

| **Nature Trails** | **Mileage** | **Time** | **Starting Point** | **Trail Description**
---|---|---|---|---
| Sony Palm Oasis | 0.3 miles | 0.5 miles | Jumbo Rocks Campground | A canyon with numerous palm stands. A side trip to Victory Palms or Mountain Campground involves boulder scrambling. Moderate to oasis, then strenuous.

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**Area Information**

For information about accommodations and attractions in surrounding communities, you may contact the following chambers of commerce:

- **Indio**
  - 82-925 Indio Blvd.
  - Indio, CA 92201
  - 760-347-0676
  - indiochamber@aol.com
  - www.indiochamber.org

- **Joshua Tree**
  - P.O. Box 600
  - Joshua Tree, CA 92252
  - 760-366-3723
  - www.joshuatreechamber.org

- **Palm Springs**
  - 190 W. Amado Rd.
  - Palm Springs, CA 92262
  - 760-325-1577
  - PSChamber@worldnet.att.net
  - www.pschamber.org

- **Yucca Valley**
  - 56300 29 Palms Hwy.
  - Yucca Valley, CA 92284
  - 760-367-3445
  - chamber@yuccavalley.org
  - www.yuccavalley.org

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**The Joshua Tree Guide is produced by the employees and volunteers of Joshua Tree National Park and Joshua Tree National Park Association and is published by Joshua Tree National Park Association.**

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**Emergency:** dial 909-383-5651

**Joshua Tree Guide**
The Desert Fan Palm: A California Native

In an otherwise hot and sparse environment, palm oases are a luxuriant gift of shade and solace. The verdant display requires a constant supply of water so oases often occur along fault lines, where uplifted layers of hard impermeable rock forces underground water to the surface. There are only 158 desert fan palm oases in North America. Five are located in Joshua Tree National Park.

The desert fan palm, *Washingtonia filifera*, is native to the low hot deserts of Southern California where it can live for 80 to 90 years. Towering up to 75 feet, the desert fan palm is among the tallest of North American palms. It is definitely the heaviest: a mature desert fan palm can weigh as much as three tons. Its distinctive leaves are shaped like a fan and folded like an accordion. They measure up to six feet in length and are nearly as wide. Looking much like “petticoats,” the fan palm’s dead leaves remain attached to its trunk until removed by fire, wind, or flood.

Fire is beneficial for palms and rarely kills an adult. In palms the vascular bundles, those tubes that transport water and nutrients, are scattered throughout the trunk. This arrangement provides insulation from the heat of a fire. In contrast, trees such as oaks have all their vascular tissue in a ring just beneath the bark. Fire does kill young palms, but it also removes competitors and opens up space for palm seeds to germinate. In fact, desert fan palms increase seed production immediately after fires. A healthy palm can produce as many as 350,000 seeds.

People have been attracted to palm oases since prehistoric times. Native Americans ate the palm fruit and used the fronds to build waterproof dwellings. The Cahuilla Indians, who left bedrock mortars and clay pots, or ollas, in the area.

**Where in the Park is Cottonwood Spring?**

Cottonwood Spring Oasis, one of the best kept secrets in Joshua Tree National Park, is just seven miles from the southern entrance to the park. The spring, the result of earthquake activity, was used for centuries by the Cahuilla Indians, who left bedrock mortars and clay pots, or ollas, in the area.

Cottonwood Spring was an important water stop for prospectors, miners, and teamsters traveling from Mecca to mines in the north. Water was necessary for gold processing, so a number of gold mines were located here. The remains of an arrastra, a primitive type of gold mill, can be found near the spring, and concrete ruins mark the sites of two later gold mills in the area.

Cottonwood Spring was first mentioned in a gold mine claim filed in 1875, indicating that the trees are native. Fan palms first appear around 1920, perhaps growing from seeds deposited by a bird or coyote.

A number of hikes begin at Cottonwood Spring. A short, easy walk down Cottonwood Wash leads past a second oasis to a dry falls. In wet years, the falls can become a scene of rushing water and red-spotted toads. Bighorn sheep often come up the wash for water in the early hours. An old teamster road drops down past the falls to the lower wash. A short hike leads through pale verde and desert Willow trees to the remains of Moorten’s Mill.

The three-mile loop trail to Mastodon Peak offers spectacular views, interesting geology, the Mastodon Mine, and the Winona Mill Site. And, for those looking for a longer hike—eight miles round trip—and the largest stand of fan palms in the park, the Lost Palms Oasis trail is a sure winner.

**But you don’t have to hike to enjoy Cottonwood Spring.** This is one of the best birding spots in the park, so bring your binoculars and sit a spell.

The campground, which has water and rest rooms, is located one-half mile from Cottonwood Spring via a signed trail; there are also shaded picnic tables in the campground. To learn more about the plants, animals, and history of this fascinating place, join a ranger-led hike, walk, or campfire program, offered most weekends.

Water is a necessity. Desert fan palms suck up water using a mass of pencil-wide rootlets so dense that the roots of other plant species cannot penetrate. This mass may extend as far as 20 feet from the trunk in all directions. But water, in the form of flash floods, is also the most common cause of death for desert fan palms living in narrow canyons.

Water also draws animals such as bighorn sheep, Gambel’s quail, and coyotes to palm oases. Coyotes help spread palms by eating palm fruit at one location and depositing the undigested seeds at another. The cool shade of an oasis provides habitat for animals that live nowhere else. After dark, a rush of air may be caused by the passing of a western yellow bat—they only roost in palms. During the day, a flash of yellow-orange might be a hooded oriole preparing to build its woven sack-like nest under the large green leaves of a desert fan palm. The dime-sized holes seen in the trunks of palms are exit holes of the two-inch, blue-black, giant palm-boring beetle, *Dinapate wrightii*, who lives exclusively in palm oases.

The larvae of the Dinapate beetle spend about five years chewing tunnels within the trunks of desert fan palms. The chewing is so loud that woodpeckers use the noise to locate the larvae. Successful larvae pupate within the trunk then chew their way out. Because their rear end is wider than their front end, they exit going backwards to avoid getting stuck. Emerging in June, males and females mate and then die within a few weeks. Eventually these beetles can kill a palm, but they only inhabit older trees. Giant palm-boring beetles keep the palm population young and vibrant. The presence of these beetles is actually a sign of a healthy oasis.

**Palms stand straight and tall, looking proud and invincible. But they aren’t. Any place can be overly loved. As you explore these oases of wonder, take care. Use existing paths. Watch out for young palms—seedlings look like thick blades of grass. We do not want the presence of people to be a sign of a declining oasis.**

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**Think Globally, Act Locally**

Bring your aluminum and metal cans, glass, and plastic to a campground recycling center. Share or recycle this Joshua Tree Guide when you have finished reading it. Participate in recycling in your community.

8 Joshua Tree Guide
Camping away from city lights gives many of us city dwellers a chance to see the sky as we have never seen it. A great way to introduce someone to the "dark sky" is to tour the Milky Way with binoculars. First just lie back on the ground and gaze at the band of light. Notice how it is brighter in places, with clumps of light and dark streaks where stars seem to be absent. Realize that the glow of light is from stars so far away that we can't quite make them out. The dark lanes are actually interstellar dust that blocks our view. The clumps of light are clouds of stars.

Find one of those star clouds and, without taking your gaze away from it, raise your binoculars to your eyes. The cloud will resolve into hundreds of stars, with perhaps smaller clumps and hazy patches in the field of view.

Notice how the Milky Way seems to be very bright and dense to the south near the horizon? You are looking toward the center of our galaxy, where the stars are richest. The constellations Sagittarius and Scorpio lie in this direction.

Just west of Sagittarius is Scorpio, one of the few constellations that looks like its name. Scorpio is distinguished by the bright red star Antares, located in the scorpion's neck. Look at Antares with binoculars. See the large fuzzy ball of light next to it? That is a large globular cluster.

Turn your attention northward, above and to the left of the stars of Sagittarius. You will see a large cloud of stars. This is the Scutum star cloud. With binoculars you should easily see a hazy patch of light. This is a beautiful open star cluster.

As we move farther north, higher in the sky, we see the star clouds in the constellation Cygnus, the swan. This constellation also looks like its name. We can see the neck pointing south, and the wings stretched east and west. The bright star behind the wings is Deneb, the "tail" of Cygnus.

To help identify the many objects you will find with binoculars, you will want a star chart. A circular "star finder," also known as a "planisphere," will show the location of many celestial objects.

Rockpiles

The geologic landscape of Joshua Tree has long fascinated visitors to this desert. How did the rocks take on such fantastic shapes? What forces sculpted them?

Geologists believe the face of our modern landscape was born more than 100 million years ago. Molten liquid, heated by the continuous movement of Earth's crust, oozed upward and cooled while still below the surface of the overlying rock. These plutonic intrusions are a granitic rock called monzogranite.

The monzogranite developed a system of rectangular joints. One set, oriented roughly horizontally, resulted from the removal, by erosion, of the miles of overlying rock, called gneiss (pronounced "nice"). Another set of joints is oriented vertically, roughly paralleling the contact of the monzogranite with its surrounding rocks. The third set is also vertical, but cuts the second set at high angles. The resulting system of joints tended to develop rectangular blocks. (figure 1) Good examples of the joint system may be seen at Jumbo Rocks, Wonderland of Rocks, and Split Rock.

As ground water percolated down through the monzogranite's joint fractures, it began to transform some hard mineral grains along its path into soft clay, while it loosened and freed grains resistant to solution. Rectangular stones slowly weathered to spheres of hard rock surrounded by soft clay containing loose mineral grains. Imagine holding an ice cube under the faucet. The cube rounds away at the corners first, because that is the part most exposed to the force of the water. A similar thing happened here, but over millions of years, on a grand scale, and during a much wetter climate. (figure 2)

After the arrival of the arid climate of recent times, flash floods began washing away the protective ground surface. As they were exposed, the huge eroded boulders settled one on top of another, creating those impressive rock piles we see today. (figure 3)

Visitors also wonder about the "broken terrace walls" laced throughout the boulders. These are naturally occurring formations called dikes. Younger than the surrounding monzogranite, dikes were formed when molten rock was pushed into existing joint fractures. Light-colored dikes formed as a mixture of quartz and potassium minerals cooled in these tight spaces. Suggesting the work of a stonemason, they broke into uniform blocks when they were exposed to the surface.

Of the dynamic processes that erode rock material, water, even in arid environments, is the most important. Wind action is also important, but less so than the action of water.

The processes operating in the arid conditions of the present are only partially responsible for the sculpturing of the rocks. The present landscape is essentially a collection of relic features inherited from earlier times of higher rainfall and lower temperatures.
Surrounded by twisted, spiky trees straight out of a Dr. Seuss book, you might begin to question your map. Where are we anyway? In wonder, the traveler pulls over for a snapshot of this prickly oddity; the naturalist reaches for a botanical guide to explain this vegetative spectacle; and the rock climber shouts “Yowch!” when poked by dagger-like spines on the way to the 5.10 climbing route.

Known as the park namesake, the Joshua tree, **Yucca brevifolia**, is a giant member of the lily family, like the California fan palm, **Washingtonia filifera**; the Joshua tree is a monocot, in the subgroup of flowering plants that also includes grasses and orchids. Don’t confuse the Joshua tree with the Mojave yucca, **Yucca schidigera**. This close relative can be distinguished by its longer, wider leaves and fibrous threads curling along leaf margins.

Don’t confuse the Joshua tree with the **Washingtonia filifera**, the Joshua tree is a monocot, in the subgroup of flowering plants that also includes grasses and orchids. Don’t confuse the Joshua tree with the Mojave yucca, **Yucca schidigera**. This close relative can be distinguished by its longer, wider leaves and fibrous threads curling along leaf margins. Both types of yuccas can be seen growing together in the park. The Joshua tree provides a good indicator that you are in the Mojave Desert, but you may also find it growing next to a saguaro cactus in the Sonoran Desert in western Arizona or mixed with pines in the San Bernardino Mountains.

Years ago the Joshua tree was recognized by American Indians for its useful properties: tough leaves were worked into baskets and sandals, and flower buds and raw or roasted seeds made a healthy addition to the diet. The local Cahuilla have long referred to the tree as “hunuvat chiy’a” or “humwichawa”; both names are used by a few elders fluent in the language.

By the mid-19th century, Mormon immigrants had made their way across the Colorado River. Legend has it that these pioneers named the tree after the biblical figure, Joshua, seeing the limbs of the tree as outstretched in supplication, guiding the travelers westward. Concurrent with Mormon settlers, ranchers and miners arrived in the high desert with high hopes of raising cattle and digging for gold. These homesteaders used the Joshua tree’s limbs and trunks for fencing and corrals. Miners found a source of fuel for the steam engines used in processing ore.

Today we enjoy this yucca for its grotesque appearance, a surprising sight in the landscape of biological interest. The Joshua tree’s life cycle begins with the rare germination of a seed, its survival dependent upon well-timed rains. Look for sprouts growing up from within the protective branches of a shrub. Young sprouts may grow several inches in the first five years, and then slow down, averaging one-half inch per year thereafter. The tallest Joshua tree in the park looms a whopping forty feet high, a grand presence in the Queen Valley forest; it is estimated to be about 300 years old! These “trees” do not have growth rings like you would find in an oak or pine. This makes aging difficult, but you can divide the height of a Joshua tree by the average annual growth of one-half inch to get a rough estimate.

Spring rains may bring clusters of white-green flowers on long stalks at branch tips. Like all desert blooms, Joshua trees depend on just the perfect conditions: well-timed rains, and for the Joshua tree, a crisp winter freeze. Researchers believe that below freezing temperatures may damage the growing end of a branch and stimulate flowering, following by branching. You may notice some Joshua trees grow like straight stalks; these trees have never bloomed—which is why they are branchless! In addition to ideal weather, the pollination of flowers requires a visit from the yucca moth. The moth collects pollen while laying her eggs inside the flower ovary. As seeds develop and mature, the eggs hatch into larvae, which feed on the seeds. The tree relies on the moth for pollination and the moth relies on the tree for a few seeds for her young—a happy symbiosis. The Joshua tree is also capable of sprouting from roots and branches. Being able to reproduce vegetatively allows a much quicker recovery after damaging floods or fires, which may kill the main tree.

Many birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects depend on the Joshua tree for food and shelter. Keep your eyes open for the yellow and black flash of a Scott’s oriole busy making a nest in a yucca’s branches. At the base of rocks you may find a wood rat nest built with spiny yucca leaves for protection. As evening falls, the desert night lizard begins poking around under the log of a fallen Joshua tree in search of tasty insects.

You may be at ease with pine or hardwood, or find shade under the domesticated trees in your city park, but in the high desert, Joshua is our tree. It is an important part of the Mojave Desert ecosystem, providing habitat for numerous birds, mammals, insects, and lizards. Joshua tree forests tell a story of survival, resilience, and beauty borne through perseverance. They are the silhouette that reminds those of us who live here that we are home. Like the Lorax we speak for the trees, but often the trees speak to us.

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**Desert Institute**

The Desert Institute, the educational field program sponsored by Joshua Tree National Park Association, a not-for-profit organization, offers outdoor classes related to Joshua Tree National Park and the California deserts. Taught by experts in their field, classes vary in length from one to three days. Optional college credit is offered through University of California Riverside Extension for course titles followed by an asterisk (*). Course fees vary from $45 to $200.

**Fall Class Schedule**

- **Desert Night Sky** Sep 23
- **Insects of the Desert** Sep 24
- **Geology of the San Andreas Fault** Sep 30
- **Reptiles of the Desert** Oct 1
- **Drawing the Desert** Oct 7
- **Watercolor Painting in the Park** Oct 8
- **Pine City** Oct 14
- **Smith Water Canyon** Oct 15
- **Native American Basket Weaving** Oct 21, 22
- **Native American Basket Weaving Advanced** Oct 28, 29
- **Archaeology of Joshua Tree National Park* Oct 28, 29
- **Native California Pigments and Paints** Nov 4
- **Stubbe Springs: a closer look at a desert water source** Nov 5
- **Photographing the Joshua Tree Landscape** Nov 10, 11
- **Mystery of the Wonderland of Rocks** Nov 12
- **Geology: Creation of the Joshua Tree Landscape* Oct 18, 19
- **Map & Compass Basic Skills** Dec 1, 2
- **Map & Compass Advanced Skills** Dec 3

Contact us for a brochure or to sign up for a course: www.joshuatree.org / tel. 760-367-5535 / fax 760-367-5583 / e-mail desertinstitute@zippnet.net.

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**By Vegetation Specialist Jane Rodgers**
Publications to help you plan a visit to Joshua Tree National Park

The following publications have been selected for their value in planning your trip to Joshua Tree National Park. These items and many more may be ordered by mail, telephone, fax, or on the web at www.joshuatree.org.

Getting to Know Joshua Tree National Park

Road Guide to Joshua Tree National Park, Decker. Guides visitors on a driving tour through the land where the Mojave and Colorado Deserts meet. 48 pages PB $5.95

On Foot in Joshua Tree, Furush. A comprehensive hiking guide featuring 90 park hikes, 40 photos and illustrations, and 26 maps and reference charts. 173 pages PB $14.95


Joshua Tree The Complete Guide, Kaiser. Filled with invaluable tips, maps, and trail descriptions to help you make the most of your time in Joshua Tree. 207 pages PB $19.99

Joshua Tree Desert Reflections, Trimble. Dazzling photos and lyrical narrative make this book both the perfect introduction to the park and a treasured momento. 40 pages PB $9.95

Joshua Tree Video. Excellent introduction to Joshua Tree National Park. 30 minutes VHS $13.95; PAL $15.95

Recreation Map of Joshua Tree, Harrison. Colorful map of Joshua Tree National Park highlighting points of interest, campgrounds, picnic areas, topographic features, and backcountry roads and trails. $8.95

Trails Illustrated Topographic Map of Joshua Tree National Park. Includes elevations, backcountry camping, hikes, routes, and safety. Waterproof and tearproof. $9.95

Joshua Tree, The Story Behind the Scenery, Vuncannon. Full of color photos and fascinating text, the perfect introduction to the park. 48 pages PB $9.95; $10.95 for French or German.

Joshua Tree National Park Geology. Trent and Hazlett. Explores the geology and evolution of the Joshua Tree landscape. Includes sections on plate tectonics, regional geology, and seismic activity. PB $9.95

50 Best Short Hikes, Krist. Covers Joshua Tree, Death Valley and Mojave. Hikes range from easy nature trails to more challenging routes suitable for a full day of hiking. 204 pages PB $12.95

On the Road in California

California Deserts, Schad. Takes you on a journey through the hottest, driest, lowest, and loveliest places in North America. 103 pages PB $14.95

National Audubon Society Field Guide to California, Alden, Health. A complete overview of California’s natural history including an extensive sampling of the state’s parks, preserves, beaches, forests, islands, and wildlife sanctuaries. 450 pages $19.95

The Living Desert, exploring national parks and monuments through natural sounds. Tape $10.95; CD $15.95.

The Complete Guide to America’s National Parks, Fodor’s. Up-to-date guide to all 384 National Park Service sites. 448 pages PB $19.00

California Road & Recreation Atlas. Detailed maps include landscape, recreation guides, GPS grids, and freeway exit numbers. 143 pages PB $24.95

Education to enhance your visit to Joshua Tree National Park

THE DESERT INSTITUTE AT JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK, the education program of the Joshua Tree National Park Association, sponsors one, two, and three day field classes on weekends from September to May. Each class examines a natural or cultural feature of the Mojave Desert and is geared to teachers, volunteer interpreters, park visitors, and others interested in learning about the park and the Mojave Desert. College credit is available through University of California Riverside Extension.

MEMBERS OF THE JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION are automatically enrolled in Partners in Nature Education (PINE), which qualifies them to receive a $10 discount on each Desert Institute class, as well as discounts on University of California Riverside Extension outdoor study courses. For information on becoming a Joshua Tree National Park Association member, call 760-367-5535.

A CATALOGUE OF DESERT INSTITUTE CLASSES is available at park visitor centers, or you may call 760-367-5535 and request one by mail. An on-line class catalogue is available on our website: www.joshuatree.org.

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California Road & Recreation Atlas. Detailed maps include landscape, recreation guides, GPS grids, and freeway exit numbers. 143 pages PB $24.95

Life in the Desert

Desert Survival Tips, Tricks, & Skills, Nester. Explains how to deal with emergencies that might arise in a desert environment. Filled with examples, narratives, and illustrations to aid understanding. 70 pages PB $10.95

How Indians Used Desert Plants, Cornett. An informative account of the ways early natives used a variety of desert plants for food, tools, building materials, and as an integral part of their daily lives. 62 pages PB $9.95

Geology Underfoot in Southern California, Sharp and Glazner. An inside view of the southland’s often active, sometimes enigmatic, and always interesting landscape. 224 pages PB $14.00

Desert Solitaire, Abbey. The author’s recollection of summers spent as a ranger in the canyon and rim country of southern Utah, including observations of the natural world. 269 pages PB $14.00
LOST HORSE GOLD MINE

Even before the California Gold Rush of 1849, prospectors were finding gold in southern California. As the take from the mines in the Sierras petered out, miners fanned out into the deserts. Here hot summers, scarce water, limited wood sources, and the difficulty and high cost of transporting equipment and provisions created a challenging environment in which to operate a mine. But a few hardy adventurers persevered and about 300 mines were developed in what is now Joshua Tree National Park—although few were good producers.

An exception is the Lost Horse Mine, which produced 10,000 ounces of gold and 16,000 ounces of silver (worth approximately $5 million today) between 1894 and 1931. When the story of the Lost Horse Mine is told, it sounds like a western campfire tale: gun-slinging cowboys, cattle rustlers, horse thieves, the lure of gold, and a sticky-fingered miner.

Johnny Lang

As long-time resident William F. Keys, told the story, Johnny Lang and his father drove their herd of cattle into the Lost Horse Valley in 1890, when there was “nothing but cattle and Indians.” Johnny told Keys that they had moved west after his brother and six other cowboys were gunned down in New Mexico.

One night, while camped in the Lost Horse Valley, the Langs’ horses disappeared. Next morning Johnny tracked them to the McHaney brothers’ camp near today’s Desert Queen Ranch. According to local legend, the McHaney Gang were cattle rustlers. Keys said they told Johnny his horses weren’t there and to leave the area.

“Dutch” Frank, who told of also being threatened by the McHaney Gang, had discovered a rich mine but was afraid to develop it. Johnny and his father bought the rights to the mine for $1,000 and called it the Lost Horse. To reduce the chances of being killed by the McHaney Gang or having his claim jumped, Johnny took on three partners. After filing their claim, they set up a two-stamp mill and began processing gold.

J.D. Ryan

A wealthy rancher from Montana, J.D. Ryan, bought out Johnny’s partners in 1895. The next year he found a steam-powered, ten-stamp mill somewhere near the Colorado River and had it dismantled and hauled to the mine site.

To provide steam for the mill, Ryan ran a two-inch pipeline 3.5 miles, from wells at his ranch to an earth and stone reservoir near the mill. Steam engines fueled by trees from nearby mountains were used to push the water up the 750 foot elevation gain where it was boiled to power the stamp mill. Heating the water at both the ranch and the mill required a lot of wood, and the results of the timbering can be seen today in the sparsely vegetated hillsides at both sites.

Getting to the Gold

The booming of the ten 850-pound stamps could be heard echoing across the valley 24 hours a day as the ore was crushed. Water added to the crushed rock made a slurry, which washed over copper plates covered with a thin film of mercury. The gold particles clung to the mercury and the debris washed away.

The amalgam of mercury and gold was smelted to separate the two metals. The mercury could be reused. The gold was formed into 200 pound bricks, concealed in a 16-horse freight wagon, and carried to Banning every week. The 130-mile trip to deliver the gold and return with supplies took five days.

As the story goes, the day shift was producing an amalgam the size of a baseball while the night shift, supervised by Lang, recovered a mere golf ball. Ryan hired a detective to investigate and discovered that when Johnny removed the amalgam from the copper plates, he kept half for himself. Ryan gave Lang a choice: sell out or go to jail. Lang sold, then moved into a nearby canyon where he continued to prospect.

The Lost Horse Mine continued producing until 1905, when the miners hit a fault line and forever lost the ore-bearing vein. The mine was leased to others or left dormant until 1931, when rising gold prices prompted the processing of 600 tons of tailings (unprocessed chunks of leftover ore) with cyanide, producing a few hundred ounces of gold.

During one of the mine’s dormant phases, Lang set up residence in the cookhouse. According to Keys, Lang had hidden his stolen amalgam at the mill site and, unable to get to it before Ryan ran him off, had returned to retrieve his stash. Lang sold what Keys called “pure gold bullion” on several occasions during this time. In the winter of 1925, Johnny Lang died of exposure along Keys View Road. Two months later, Keys found his body and buried him across from the access road to the mine.

National Park Service

With the creation of Joshua Tree National Monument in 1936, Lost Horse Mine came under the protection of the National Park Service. With time, the wooden portions of the cabins and the headframe of the mill collapsed and the 500 foot mine shaft, with horizontal tunnels at each 100 foot level, began to collapse. The combination of unstable mine workings and earthquakes created a sink hole near the mill that eventually threatened the entire structure. Even the cable netting and concrete caps, that were installed to protect visitors, were consumed by the ever-expanding hole.

“Puffing” the Mine

In 1996 a new technique for capping mineshafts was tried. A plastic foam product called PUF (polyurethane foam), similar to the material used for home insulating, was injected into the hole to provide a stabilizing plug. The plug was then covered with fill to protect it from UV damage and a wooden replica of the shaft collar was constructed. Today Lost Horse Mill is considered one of the best preserved mills of its kind in a National Park Service unit.

Lost Horse is one of the most popular destinations for visitors looking for a moderate hike. The trailhead is located off Keys View Road. The trail, which is a four-mile round-trip, follows the road developed by the Ryans to haul ore and supplies.

Mine shafts are dangerous, and historic structures are easily damaged. While the Lost Horse site has been stabilized, it is still not safe to walk on. Please stay behind the fencing.