The Beany: Back in Business!

When first opened in 1924, The Beany Depot Lunch room seated up to 33 customers at its U-shaped counter. It operated 24 hours a day with waiters, waitresses, and cooks working around-the-clock in three eight-hour shifts. Like everything else in Kelso, “The Beany” (as the lunch counter was known to railroad workers) saw its greatest activity during the World War II years.

Imagine a hungry train passenger coming into The Beany for a bite to eat back in 1944: a typical prime rib entree including soup and salad, dessert, and beverage cost about $1.25. The homemade pies and cookies were favorite menu items among customers, including railroad employees who made Kelso a frequent stop on their travels. Even as recently as the late 1970s and early 1980s, westbound train crews, upon arrival at Cima (20 miles northeast of Kelso), would call ahead to The Beany with their lunch orders. When they reached Kelso Depot, their food was waiting for them at the counter.

But after 61 years of serving hungry train passengers, railroad employees, and town residents, Kelso Depot and The Beany sadly closed its doors at midnight, June 30, 1985. With the establishment of Mojave National Preserve in 1994, the National Park Service took ownership of the property and, after extensive renovation, Kelso Depot reopened to the public as a visitor center in October 2005. From the start, the National Park Service sought a concessionaire to operate the lunch counter. Finding one proved more difficult than anticipated, however. Years passed, while many a visitor passing through Kelso Depot Visitor Center recalled with relish the delicious homemade cookies and other treats once served.

It wasn’t until June 2008 that a concessionaire was finally found for The Beany. Or, rather, they found each other.

A 29-year resident of Yucca Valley, Calif., Mike Williams was employed as a construction worker when he decided he needed change in his life. Upon learning that the National Park Service was searching for a lunch counter concessionaire at Kelso Depot, Mike anxiously placed his bid, which was reviewed and accepted. Being that Kelso is a very small town these days, it didn’t take long for the, “Beany” to become a favorite hangout for local residents, Kelso Depot Visitor Center staff, and the many visitors passing through. “The Beany” was brought back to life on March 20, 2009, open for business again after nearly a quarter-century.

Today, The Beany looks much like it did back in the 1920s and 1930s, offering a little something for everyone. The menu includes a variety of salads and sandwiches, hot dogs, ice-cold soda pop, milkshakes, fruit smoothies, and, of course, pie, brownies, scooped ice cream, and cookies. And, with a characteristic grin, Mike Williams claims that the freshly brewed coffee is “voted best in all of Kelso.”

The Beany @ Kelso is open 5 days a week, Friday through Tuesday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. For more information, call 760-252-6665.

Bringing back the “good old days” has never been more fun, and with good food and great company, you might never want to leave.

Lisa Barefield, Park Ranger and Kelso resident

3 Mojave’s Roads

Just getting around Mojave National Preserve, the third-largest unit of the National Park System in the contiguous United States, can be a real for some. But it need not be. Plan ahead and prioritize; familiarize yourself with Mojave’s paved and dirt roads and the major sites to see along the way. And remember— you won’t see it all in one day (but you can always come back)...

4 Kelso & Trains!

Got trains on your brain? You’re not alone. Kelso residents and park ranger Tim Duncan describe their love for locomotives and the rich railroading history of the town they call home.

Welcome to Mojave!

October 31, 2009, marks the 15th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act, the law that created Mojave National Preserve. During those 15 years, the National Park Service has expanded recreational opportunities, reclaimed abandoned mine lands, and increased scientific study of desert environments. Our most visible and, for many, most appreciated milestone was the renovation and reopening of the Kelso Depot as Mojave’s principal visitor center. Join us to celebrate this milestone at our anniversary event on October 31 at Kelso Depot.

Mojave’s landscape varies tremendously as you travel around the preserve, and I encourage you to take short walks in various areas. Inside this guide, you’ll find information on how to visit the Kelso Dunes, Cinder Cones & Lava Beds, and the Joshua tree woodland on Cima Dome. On the east side of the park, campgrounds and hiking trails are available for those with more time to explore.

More than 1,000 miles of dirt roads await desert explorers in street-legal vehicles, providing access to old mining sites, springs, and roadside camps. Some routes require high-clearance vehicles and/or four-wheel drive, and road conditions change rapidly during rainy weather, so check with a ranger before heading out.

If you would like to learn more about what to see and do, talk to the rangers at Kelso Depot Visitor Center or Hike-in-the-Wall Information Center, visit our website, or call the headquarters information desk. Websites and phone numbers are listed on page two.

Dennis Schramm
Superintendent

6 Campgrounds

Mojave National Preserve is a camper’s paradise. Developed campgrounds, roadside camping, and backcountry camping offer opportunities for individuals and groups of diverse ages, interests, and skills. Careful planning and knowledge of camping rules and regulations will help ensure an enjoyable and safe experience for you, future visitors, and the fragile desert environment...

Essential Information...
Faces & Places...
Nature & Science...
Camping...
Hiking...
Mojave National Preserve Map...
Hunting in the National Park System?

“Hunting in Mojave National Preserve? Is it legal? Have closures?”

Hunting in the National Park System is generally prohibited. However, there are a few exceptions:

1. **Furbearer Hunting in Certain Units**: In some units of the National Park System, furbearer hunting is allowed. These areas are typically managed under state hunting regulations.

2. **Conservation-Minded Hunting**: In some units, like the National Park Service, conservation-minded hunting is allowed. This includes hunting for non-lethal purposes, such as scientific research.

3. **Traditional Use Rights**: In some areas, traditional use rights allow certain hunting activities, especially in tribes with a long history of traditional hunting practices.

4. ** licenses**: In some cases, special hunting licenses might be required, such as for certain species.

5. **Managed Areas**: In some areas, hunting is allowed but is managed under specific guidelines to protect wildlife.

For the most up-to-date information, visit the website of the park or the National Park Service.

**Pets**

Though not allowed inside information centers, pets are welcome elsewhere. They must be leashed and never left unattended. Dogs used during hunting activities must be under the owner’s control at all times. Pet excrement must be collected and disposed of in garbage receptacles.

**Permits**

Permits are required for all organized events, group events (more than 15 individuals or seven vehicles), and commercial activities such as filming. Feels apply. Proof of insurance and posting of a bond might also be required. Call 760-252-6100 or visit www.nps.gov/loja for more information.

**Hunting and Firearms**

Hunting is permitted in accordance with state regulations. All hunting activities require a license; additional permits and tags might apply. Visit the California Department of Fish & Game website at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/ for more information.

**Target shooting or “pinking” is prohibited. All firearms transported within the preserve must be unloaded, cased, and broken down, except during lawful hunting activities. No shooting is permitted within 1/2 mile of developed areas, including campgrounds, information centers, Kelso Dunes, Fort Piute, Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center, and the Desert Studies Center at Zzyzx.**

**Collecting and Vandalism**

Disturbing, defacing, or collecting plants, animals, rocks, historic or archeological objects is prohibited. Leave these resources as you find them for everyone to enjoy. Metal detectors are not allowed.

**Private Property**

Private holdings are found throughout the preserve. Please respect the rights of our neighbors. It is your responsibility to obtain permission before entering private property, including to hunt or hike.

**Cattle and Fences**

Most grazing within Mojave National Preserve occurs on public land. This land is open to you to explore, but please don’t disturb cattle, fences, or water tanks. Leave gates as you find them.

**Firewood and Campfires**

Wood is scarce in the desert. Cutting or collecting any wood, including downed wood, is prohibited. All firewood, including kindling, must be brought in. Firewood is sometimes available for purchase at Baker, Fenner, or Roppon, Calif., or at Providence Mountains State Recreation Area (Mitchell Caverns). Campfires are allowed in fire rings and other established sites. To minimize your impact, use a fire pan and pack out the ashes. Please do not leave fires smoldering or unattended.
Exploring Mojave

Avenues to Adventure

Mojave National Preserve is vast. At 1.6 million acres, it is the third-largest unit of the National Park System in the contiguous United States. While much of Mojave’s wild and historic splendor is available to those who travel its trails and unmarked roads, the primary roads of the preserve offer endless opportunities for exploration (see map on page 8).

Kelbaker Road
A 56-mile paved road stretching from I-15 to Baker, Calif., the north to 46 east of Ludlow, Calif., south of the Kelbaker Road winds past cinder cones, lava flows, Kelso Depot, Kelso Dunes, and the Granite Mountains.

Cinder Cones and Lava Flows
No signs or services. About 14 miles southeast of Baker, Kelbaker Road traverses a 2,560-acre area of lava flows and volcanic cinder cones thought to range in age from 10,000 to 7,000 years old. Developed in 1973, the area was designated as Cinder Cones National Natural Landmark due to its scenic beauty and exceptional geological value. Aiken Mine Road (19 miles southeast of Baker, Calif.) offers an interesting side trip through the heart of the area and access to a lava tube. High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.

Kelso Depot Visitor Center
Information, exhibits, orientation film, art gallery, bookstore, food (The Beany @ Kelso), restroom, water, picnic area. Located 34 miles southeast of Baker, Kelso Depot began operation in 1924 and served as train station, restaurant, and employee housing on the Overland Route of the Union Pacific Railroad. Now a Mojave National Preserve information center and museum, it offers extensive exhibits describing the cultural and natural history of the preserve. Historically furnished rooms offer a glimpse into Kelso’s past.

Kelso Dunes
Self-guiding trail, pit toilets, no water. About 42 miles southeast of Baker (8 miles south of Kelso Depot), then three miles west on a graded dirt road. Nearly 700 feet high and covering a 4.5-square-mile area, the Kelso Dunes were created over the course of 25,000 years by winds carrying sand grains from the dried Soda Lake and Mojave River Sink located to the northwest. The Providence and Granite mountains served as barriers that trapped the blowing sand. The dunes produce a “booming” or “singing” sound when sand with the right moisture content slides down the steep slopes. Try it for yourself—run down a dune slope (but don’t trample vegetation!) to initiate the sound.

Granite Mountains
No signs or services. An imposing jumble of granite marks the southern entrance to the preserve, 50 miles southeast of Baker on Kelbaker Road. Portions of the Granite Mountains lie within the University of California’s Desert Research Center; please respect the signs that mark the boundary. High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.

Clark Mountain
No signs or services. The only portion of Mojave National Preserve north of I-15, Clark Mountain is also the highest point, at 7,929 feet. A relic white fir grove, at 7,929 feet. A relict white fir grove

Cima Road
About 28 miles west of Baker, Calif., the paved Cima Road connects I-15 with Cima, Calif., 16 miles to the southeast.

Cima Dome and Joshua Tree Forest
Self-guiding trail, no water. The near-perfect symmetry of Cima Dome rises 1,500 feet above the surrounding desert and provides ideal habitat for the world’s largest concentration of Joshua trees. Although the top of the dome is located west of Cima Road near the Tule亚 Park trailhead, this unusual geologic feature is best seen from a distance. Try the look west of Cima Road, 2.5 miles east of Kelso Cima Road.

Cedar Canyon and Black Canyon Roads
Mostly unpaved, the 20-mile Cedar Canyon Road connects Kelso Cima Road in the west with Ivanhap Road in the east, paralleling (and sometimes joining) the historic Mojave Road. Black Canyon Road (unpaved north of Hole-in-the-Wall) connects Cedar Canyon Road with Essex Road, 20 miles to the south.

Rock Spring
Self-guiding trail, pit toilets, picnic area, no water. A well-known waterhole for early travelers, Rock Spring is located 5.2 miles east of Black Canyon Road on Cedar Canyon Road. A signed turn-off, 1.6 miles south to the trailhead and parking area. Camp Rock Spring, a military ree established in 1866, was one of the most isolated and comfortable army posts in the West.

Mid Hills
Campground, trailhead, pit toilets, water. Not recommended for RVs. About two miles west of Black Canyon Road at the north end of Wild Horse Canyon Road, Mid Hills supports pinyon-juniper woodland habitat. The effects of a fire that swept through the area in June 2005 are evident, although several campsites in the popular camping ground still contain stands of pinyon and juniper.

Hole-in-the-Wall
Information center, bookstore, campgrounds, picnic area, trailhead, restroom, water, telephone. Just north of the junction of Black Canyon Road and the south end of Wild Horse Canyon Road, rhyolite cliffs riddled with holes and hollows are the backdrop for Hole-in-the-Wall.

Plute Spring
About 7.4 miles west of U.S. 95 on the unmarked and unpaved Moak Road, then 3.1 miles west on an extremely rough unmarked dirt road. High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.

Fort Piute and Piute Spring
Trails, weekday exhibits, no signs or services. Willow, cattails, and rushes thrive along a half-mile section of Plute Creek. Fort Piute (still visible) was one in a string of military outposts built along the Moak Road. Please don’t climb on the foundations or remove anything.

Zzyzx Road
Six miles southwest of Baker on I-15, Zzyzx Road leads five miles south into the preserve along the western shore of Soda Dry Lake.

Zzyzx/Soda Springs
Self-guiding trail, wayside exhibits, pit toilets, non-potable water, picnic area. Historically known as Soda Springs and later renamed Zzyzx (pronounced ZYe-zix), this oasis is home to the California State University Studies Center. The buildings and pond were developed in the 1940s by Curtis Springer, who operated a health resort at the site. Zzyzx is open to the public—stroll around Lake Tuendae and along the shore of Soda Dry Lake. Please do not disturb participants when classes are in session.

Nipton, Ivanhap and Lanfair Roads
Eleven miles south of Primm, Nev., Nipton Road begins at I-15 and passes through Nipton, Calif., 11 miles east. Ivanhap Road (only the 10 northernmost miles paved) heads southeast of Nipton Road, through the Ivanhap and Lanfair valleys, eventually connecting with the paved Lanfair Road and the Feiler Valley. Together stretching 46 miles, Ivanhap and Lanfair Roads connect the northern preserve boundary (building in Nipton) with the southern near Goffs, Calif.

Hotel Nipton
Privately operated hotel, store, campground, & more; for information call 760-856-2335 or email at stay@nipton.com. Built in 1910, this charming hotel reflects the railroad, ranching, and mining history of the small community at Nipton.

Caruthers Canyon
Primitive camping, hiking, no signs or services. About 5.5 miles west of Ivanhap Road on New York Mountains Road, then 2.7 miles north on an unsigned road, Caruthers Canyon is located in the rugged New York Mountains. Surrounded by mountains rising over 7,500 feet, a botanic “island” of chaparral plants remains from wetter times of the past. High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended.

Sand & Mud Driving Tips
• Be sure to carry plenty of drinking water and emergency supplies.
• Engage four-wheel drive before entering deep sand or mud.
• Don’t gun the engine—this will spin the tires, dig you in deeper, and could bury your vehicle to the frame. Smooth, easy power is better than too much power; use low gearing and just enough throttle to maintain forward movement.
• If you detect a loss of traction, turn the steering wheel rapidly from side-to-side—this might help to generate traction.
• If your vehicle gets stuck, place solid materials (such as floor mats) under the tires to provide traction.
• If you’re really stuck, it’s best to stay with your vehicle. A stationary, stranded vehicle is much easier to locate than a person traveling on foot. Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day; stay in the shade of your vehicle.

Dirt Road Driving
Prepare Your Vehicle
Ensure that your vehicle is in good condition: check tires, oil, and gas gauge.

For emergencies, carry tools, tire jack, tirebags, extra water, and fluids for your vehicle.

Know the Rules of the Road
All vehicles operating within Mojave National Preserve must be street-legal in accordance with California DMV requirements, including current registration and tags, lights and turn signals, and valid insurance. California “Green Sticker” and “Red Sticker” programs are not recognized within the preserve.

Off-pavement travel is allowed only on existing open dirt roads. Do not travel cross-country or create new roads. This rule is strictly enforced, violators will receive citations. Driving in washes is not permitted. Watch for and respect Wilderness Boundary signs; motorized vehicles and bicycles are not allowed in designated Wilderness Areas.

Check Road Conditions
Road conditions vary widely. Dirt roads might be rough, sandy, or muddy, rendering them impassable, and the unpaved motorbikes could be trapped many miles from help. Watch for cattle, buffalo, and other wildlife on roadways.

Not all roads are shown on all maps; traces and illegal shortcuts add to the confusion. Carry a good map, and ask a park ranger for current road conditions.

Mojave National Preserve 3
Desert Light Gallery

Since the turn of the last century, transcontinental railroads have promoted rail travel to national parks by producing framed prints and advertising art that depicts the beauty of these national treasures. The tradition of close ties between the railroads, art, and parks continues with Looking for the Frontier, a painting exhibition at the Desert Light Gallery in Kelso Depot Visitor Center.

A self-taught Western realist painter, Susan Altstatt’s a-jcrylic-on-canvas paintings depict landscapes and contemporary-life scenes in the desert lands of California and Nevada. In Looking for the Frontier, Altstatt captures the movable edge between ordinary human life and wilderness in the Mojave Desert. The frontier has receded. But it’s still there.

Looking for the Frontier runs from October 16, 2009, to January 3, 2010. Take home a piece of the exhibition. Original artwork will be available for purchase at the Western National Parks Association (WNPA) bookstore inside the Kelso Depot Visitor Center. Proceeds from print sales will fund additional projects aimed at promoting understanding and enjoyment of Mojave National Preserve.

Diamonds Are Forever

One of our favorite spots in Mojave National Preserve is Kelso, Calif. Of course, we’re biased—we live here—but there’s perhaps no better place to get oriented to the 1.6 million-acre preserve. All around are some of the most striking landscapes in the Mojave Desert: from the swelling, curved batholith that is Cima Dome in the northeast to the gorgeous Kelso Dunes (third highest in North America) in the southwest. And behind our home looms the Providence Mountains with their many layers of exposed rock strata. The sunset is wonderful to behold as it shines upon the flanks of the mountains, colored rose, purple, and blue in the waning light.

We love the natural beauty of the area, but we also cherish its rich history. After a bite to eat at The Beanyer lunch counter in historic Kelso Depot, it’s fun to explore the visitor center’s informative exhibits that describe the area’s Native Americans, wildlife, mining and geology, and, of course, railroad history and TRAINS!

The railway seen at Kelso today began as the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad (nicknamed “The Salt Lake Route”). Before it was even completed in 1905, the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad acquired interest in the route to access the rich markets and ports around Los Angeles. Eventually, UP gained full ownership of the line, and it became part of their “Overland Route”—the UP shield on the front of Kelso Depot still bears this title.

Kelso got its name in a more round-about way. Originally known simply as Siding 6, it became Kelso when railroad workers put their names into a hat and pulled out the name of John Kelso. By whatever means, Kelso has been a railroad town from the start. A reliable source of water from nearby Cornfield Spring was a necessity for steam engines. While diesel-electrics replaced steam locomotives after World War II, UP still houses employees at Kelso. Workers maintain all aspects of the trackage, monitor the signal system and switches, and even take care of the tree and water system west of town (planted as windbreaks, trees keep sand from blowing onto the tracks).

For transporters like us, Kelso and its surroundings offer some great opportunities. About 20 to 25 trains pass through the area each day, coming from and going to all points in North America. Just east of Kelso is a 2.2 percent grade climbing towards Cima, Calif., which slows heavy eastbound trains to a crawl. The S-curves in the track near Cima make for excellent viewing and photography. While we don’t see many passenger trains these days—Amtrak’s Desert Wind last passed Kelso in spring 1997—we do get our share of special trains like the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus train, the American Orient Express, and UP’s historic steam locomotives.

Freight trains, however, are by far most common through Kelso. Almost everything we use is transported by train in one way or another: from food, fuel, and building materials to clothing, electronics, and even beer. Most of this is loaded onto double-stack trains carrying between 240 and 400 containers (each container the equivalent of a tractor-trailer load) from Southern California to Chicago and beyond in three to five days. While the average train of this type is 5,000 to 7,000 feet in length, some can be as long as 12,000 feet. The economic and technological efficiency of modern railroads is emphasized by this type of train. The average freight train carries one ton of product 436 miles on a single gallon of diesel fuel.

Undoubtedly, and in addition to being great fun to watch, trains continue to play an important role in our economy. But as Mojave National Preserve celebrates its 15th birthday in 2009, we’re also reminded of the significance railroads have to our nation’s unparalleled system of national parklands. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries—when the Salt Lake Route first came to Kelso—trains were also the primary means of passenger travel. Railroads championed the creation of national parks and monuments and promoted travel to these areas as a means of increasing passenger service. Today, Mojave National Preserve continues this traditional relationship between railroads and parks. From our home in Kelso, we feel so fortunate to look out the window each morning, not just at a breathtaking desert landscape preserved for future generations, but also at the trains and steel rails that first brought people to these special places that belong to us all.

The Rock Spring Loop

If you were wondering how anyone could—or would want to—live in the remote desert that is now Mojave National Preserve, take a leisurely stroll along our newest park trail, the Rock Spring Loop, to find some answers. The trail starts at the Rock House, five miles east of Black Canyon Road on Cedar Canyon Road. At the Rock House, you will find a pit toilet and picnic table.

The Rock House was constructed by Bert Smith in 1919, when he came to this area to recover from poison gas exposure suffered during World War I. In 1920, he sold it to a prospector who didn’t have long to live, but the dry desert proved so beneficial to Smith’s health that he lived here for 25 more years! The second long-term resident was artist Carl Fisher, who lived and worked at the Rock House in the 1930s, selling his artwork to passing travelers.

A few minutes into the hike, the remains of a milling operation from the 1930s are visible near the trail. Rich mineral deposits of gold, silver, copper, and other precious metals have been found across this region. Rock from nearby Watson Wash was hauled here and crushed to release the copper. The project met with little success and didn’t last long. Prospectors often just walked away from such sites, leaving everything behind.

The trail continues to Rock Spring, one in a series of springs that dot the Mojave Desert every 20 to 30 miles, forming a natural travel corridor. This route eventually became known as the Mojave Trail, then later the Mojave Road. Water means life in the desert, so humans and wildlife depended on this spring, as did the livestock later introduced by miners and ranchers. Exhibits near the spring describe the Mojave and Chemehuevi Indians who formerly lived in the area, and Camp Rock Spring, an army outpost active briefly in the 1860s to protect mail and early travelers that passed along the route. Water is almost always present here, although whether it’s a slow trickle or several deep pools depends on recent rainfall.

From the spring, the trail climbs a ridge overlooking Watson Wash with expansive views of the Hackberry and Newberry mountains to the north and east. If you look carefully, you can also see portions of the Mojave Road, now a popular four-wheel drive route. This section runs parallel to Cedar Canyon Road. Leaving the ridge, you enter a small copse of juniper and pinyon trees that provide welcome shade as the trail leads you back to the Rock House.

Getting There: Rock Spring Loop Trail

Five miles east of the intersection with Black Canyon Road off 10 miles west of the intersection with Lanfair Road on the unpaved but graded Cedar Canyon Road, a signed turn-off leads south to the trailhead and parking area.

Pit toilet and picnic area available, but no camping. To learn more, talk with a park ranger at any visitor center (see page 2 for locations and contact info) or visit our website at www.nps.gov/mojp.
Abandoned Mines Now Safer to Visit

To the casual traveler, the desert might seem so harsh and forbidding that surely no one has ever lived there. But a century ago, there were dozens of slapdash settlements with hundreds of men and women across the Mojave. California’s gold rush of 1849 drew many from around the world, and those that couldn’t find gold at Sutter’s Mill quickly fanned out across California and the west.

While earlier miners operated under informal rules, the General Mining Law of 1872 established the first federal regulation of mining in the West. Under its provisions, new mining claims were permitted on nearly all public lands. It wasn’t until the Mining in the Parks Act of 1976, however, that new mining claims in national parks were prohibited, though mining on existing claims continued through a rigorous permitting process that addressed environmental and cultural resource concerns. Because Mojave National Preserve was not established until 1994, mining here continued under the 1872 statute until just 15 years ago when the more restrictive law went into effect.

Mining has always operated on a boom-and-bust cycle: when gold, silver, and other metal prices are high, marginal mines become cost-effective to operate. But when prices plunge, or ore bodies are exhausted, mines are abandoned. This long period of mining and re-mining has left thousands of prospect and mine sites within Mojave National Preserve, providing a unique physical record of the 130-year history of mining in the area. 641 mine sites have been inventoried, including 915 shafts (vertical holes) and 2,136 adits or tunnels (horizontal holes).

Although most wooden structures have been scavenged, salvaged, or vanished, the shafts, adits, and tunnels are still there, and some mines still have support timbers, headframes, and associated buildings. Visitors can see evidence of the type of materials, technology, and equipment used in prospecting and mining ventures and how they evolved through time.

The solitude of these remote settings provides an opportunity to reflect upon the harsh landscapes of the mines. However, many visitors are unaware of the serious safety hazards they face when exploring abandoned mine sites. Deep shafts draw visitors’ attention and generate the desire to investigate, yet they are also the most dangerous feature at mines. The ground surface around shafts can be highly unstable: slips or falls generally result in serious injury or death. Adits and tunnels are also attractive because it’s easy for people to walk right in. But interior timbers, supports, and ladders—many over 100 years old—create a false sense of security, luring an unsuspecting individual into dangerous conditions. Just the movement of people walking could be enough to cause a collapse. Help may be hours away and, when emergency personnel do respond, they are also exposed to substantial risk. Please: Stay Out and Stay Alive!

Given the large number of abandoned mine sites and the cost and complexity of undertaking safety treatments at unique and often dangerous locations, the National Park Service faces a daunting task in providing for public safety at abandoned mines. Substantial funding to address these hazards, while also providing jobs to Americans, became available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed into law in February 2009. With this increased funding, Mojave National Preserve has been able to move ahead with projects at several mine sites. Mojave is expected to receive $5.2 million to address public safety issues at 34 abandoned mines.

Initial projects have included work at the Evening Star Mine. Because of its nearly intact headframe and relative accessibility, the Evening Star is a well-known and frequently visited mine site. Protective grates have been installed on two deep shafts and an adit has been gated. More work will be done this fall. Other mines that have recently been protected include the Paymaster, Butcherknife, and Suzanne R mines.

There is no one standard design solution for blocking mine openings, so each must be individually designed and evaluated. And while safety is, of course, a primary concern, mine closure devices are also designed to accommodate wildlife, minimize visual impacts, and maintain the historic integrity of the site.

Linda Slater, Chief of Interpretation

The Mojave Road

This country, as a whole, seemed a vast volcanic desert—of mountains, canyons, and mesas—and what it was ever made for, except to excite wonder and astonishment, is a mystery to the passing traveler... Water was found only at distances of ten and twenty miles apart...

-J.F. Rusling describing his 1866 trip on the Mojave Road in Across America

Originally a foot trail used by Mojave and other people of the Colorado River basin to transport goods for trade with coastal tribes, the Mojave Road later served the cause of westward expansion: military forts were established along the route to protect key water sources and provide assistance for travelers. Today it is a popular four-wheel-drive road.

The Mojave Road enters the preserve near Flute Spring on the eastern boundary and at Soda Dry Lake near Zzyzx on the west. Some sections are rough and sandy; four-wheel drive is recommended. Much of the road might become slick, muddy, and impassable after rains. Be sure to inquire about road conditions, especially if you plan to cross Soda Lake.

The Mojave Road Guide by Dennis G. Casabier provides in-depth history and mile-by-mile descriptions of the route. Purchase your copy at any information center.

Mindful Motorists

Stay on established roads. Vehicles can crush burros, killing tortoises and eggs.

Check beneath your vehicle before driving away. On hot days, tortoises enjoy the shade that can provide.

Observe posted speed limits, and be especially watchful during and after rainstorms. Tortoises often enter roadways to drink from puddles.

Pet Smarts

Do not release captive tortoises. They might carry diseases that can be transmitted to wild tortoises. Instead, turn them over to a licensed tortoise-rescue center.

For information, call 760-252-6101.

Long-nosed Leopard Lizard (Gambelia wislizenii): A powerful predator that eats insects, lizards, small snakes, and even some smaller mammals like mice.

Rock Spring Loop Trail

(continued from page 4)

This trail was constructed by a Volunteer Vacations crew in April 2009. Five volunteers from around the country contributed a week of their time to improve the grounds at the Rock House, install the picnic table, and establish this trail.

As you walk to your car, think about why you decided to hike this particular trail. Was this hilly landscape so harsh and forbidding that surely no one has ever lived here? But a century ago, there were dozens of slapdash settlements with hundreds of men and women across the Mojave. California’s gold rush of 1849 drew many from around the world, and those that couldn’t find gold at Sutter’s Mill quickly fanned out across California and the west.

During the 1860s, and site of Camp Rock Spring, active as a known waterhole for early travelers... Water was found only at distances of ten and twenty miles apart...
Backcountry Guidelines & Regulations

Backcountry travel and camping—backpacking, roadside camping, and horsepacking—require careful planning in order to ensure a safe and rewarding experience. Visitors should adhere to National Park Service regulations and are further encouraged to follow Leave No Trace guidelines to minimize their impact on the fragile desert environment. Additional regulations apply for roadside camping (see below) and horsepacking (talk with a park ranger or visit us online for more information: www.nps.gov/moja).

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
   - There is no permit or registration system for backcountry camping at Mojave National Preserve; be sure to notify others of your travel itinerary.
   - Few established trails exist; carry a good map and familiarize yourself with desert travel and survival skills before beginning your trip.

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
   - Reuse existing campsites (required for roadside camping—see below).
   - Do not make camp in a dry wash; flash floods develop quickly in the desert.
   - Camping is limited to a maximum of 14 consecutive days per visit/stay and 30 total days per year.
   - Campsites must be more than 200 yards from any water source.
   - Camping is not permitted: within 1/4 mile of any paved road; within 1/2 mile of Fort Piute or Kelso Depot, within 1 mile north or south of the Kelso Dunes (i.e., the crest of the dunes) or 1/4 mile south of the Kelso Dunes access road. (Exceptions might apply for roadside camping—see below.)

3. Dispose of Waste Properly
   - Store all food and garbage in a manner that will prevent access by wildlife. Carry plastic bags and pack out all trash.
   - Burn human waste in catholes 6-8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Pack out all toilet paper and hygiene products.
   - Pet excrement must be collected and disposed of in garbage receptacles.

4. Leave What You Find
   - Disturbing, defacing, or collecting plants, animals, rocks, and historic or archeological objects is prohibited. As part of our national heritage, these resources should be left as they are found for all to enjoy. Metal detectors are not allowed.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
   - Campfires are allowed in established fire rings only, or with use of a portable firepan (be sure to pack out ashes). Do not leave fires smoldering or unattended.
   - Cutting or collecting any wood, including downed wood, is prohibited. All firewood must be brought into the preserve.

6. Respect Wildlife

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

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Guidelines specific to Mojave National Preserve:

- The message is framed under seven Leave No Trace guidelines to minimize their impact on the fragile desert environment. Additional regulations apply for roadside camping—see below—and horsepacking (talk with a park ranger or visit us online for more information: www.nps.gov/moja).
- The Hackberry Fire swept through the Mid Hills area in June 2005, burning much of the vegetation. About half of the 26 campsites were left unharmed; however—they remain surrounded by pinyon pine and juniper trees.
- At 6,600 feet in elevation, Mid Hills is much cooler than the desert floor below. The access road is unpaved and is not recommended for motorhomes or trailers.
- Roadside vehicle camping is permitted in areas that have been traditionally used for this purpose. By reusing existing sites, you help protect the desert from further damage. Sites with existing rock fire rings should be considered disturbed and suitable for roadside camping. Many roadside camping areas have been traditionally used for this purpose; please don’t enlarge them. Do not camp along paved roads or in day-use areas, and stay at least 200 yards from all water sources.

Roadside Camping
Roadside vehicle camping is permitted in areas that have been traditionally used for this purpose. By reusing existing sites, you help protect the desert from further damage. Sites with existing rock fire rings should be considered disturbed and suitable for roadside camping. Many roadside camping areas have been traditionally used for this purpose; please don’t enlarge them. Do not camp along paved roads or in day-use areas, and stay at least 200 yards from all water sources.

The National Park Service encourages roadside campers to use the following, selected sites:

Near Kelbaker Road:
- Rainy Day Mine Site
  - 15.2 miles south of Kelbaker Road, then 0.3 miles northeast on the unsigned and very sandy road to the Rainy Day Mine. Four-wheel drive recommended; no RVs.
  - Granite Pass
    - 6.1 miles north of I-40 on Kelbaker Road, just north of Granite Pass, then west on one of several access roads. Campsites are located just north of the granite spires. High clearance vehicle recommended; no RVs.
  - Kelso Dunes Mine
    - 4 miles west of Kelbaker Road on the unpaved Kelso Dunes Road. One campsite is located south of the road, ½ mile past the marked trailhead. Several others are available ¾ mile beyond, near a clump of trees. Except at these sites, roadside camping is prohibited along Kelso Dunes Road (including at the trailhead).

Near Cima Road:
- Sunrise Rock
  - 12 miles south of I-15 on the east side of Cima Road. Trailhead for Touteoua Peak Trail is nearby on the opposite side of Cima Road.

Near Black Canyon Road:
- Black Canyon Road (East)
  - 4 miles south of Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center on the east side of Black Canyon Road, above a wash and near a hill with views of the Providence Mountains. Another site is located about 4 miles further south, near rock piles.

Near Ivancagh and Cedar Canyon Roads:
- Caruthers Canyon
  - 5.5 miles west of Ivancagh Road on New York Mountains Road, then 1.5 to 2.7 miles north to campsite. High clearance and four-wheel drive recommended; no RVs.
**Developed Trails**

1) **Lake Tsuendae Nature Trail**
   - Trailhead: Zzyzx parking area, 5 miles south of I-15 on Zzyzx Road.
   - Enjoy an easy, self-guided, 1/4-mile stroll around Lake Tsuendae. Wayside exhibits reveal the rich cultural and natural history of this oasis.

2) **Neutonia Peak Trail**
   - Trailhead: 12 miles south of I-15, or 5 miles north of Cima, Calif., on Cima Road.
   - Explore the world's densest Joshua tree forest on a 10-mile round-trip route through colorful Piute Gorge and explore the ruins of Fort Piute.

3) **Rock Spring Loop Trail**
   - Trailhead: 5 miles east of Black Canyon Road on Cedar Canyon Road.
   - This one-mile loop begins at Bert Smith’s Rock Spring and ends at the Hackberry Fire burned area. Total elevation gain is 1,200 feet. Watch for trail route markers.

4) **Teutonia Peak Trail**
   - Start: 3 miles west of Kelbaker Road on the well-graded, but unpaved Kelso Dunes Road.
   - Recommended Routes: This 6-mile loop encircles Barber Peak and the Rings Loop Trail—see above.

5) **Rings Loop Trail**
   - Trailhead: Residence to MTS Hills Campground and about 1 mile west of Black Canyon Road on the south end of Wild Horse Canyon Road.
   - Hike 8 miles, one-way, through a maze of washes and valleys. The temperature inside the cave is a comfortable 65°F, so dress accordingly and wear sturdy shoes. Tour schedules are as follows:
   - Winter (Labor Day–Memorial Day) Weekdays: 1:30 p.m. 
   - Weekends: 10 a.m., 1:30 p.m., & 3 p.m. 
   - Summer (Memorial Day–Labor Day) Daily: 1:30 p.m. 
   - Fees are $6 for adults, $3 for children under 16, and $2 for children under 6. Tours are limited to 25 people. Reservations (not accepted for individuals or small groups) are required for groups of 10 or more and can be made by calling at least three weeks in advance.

6) **Hole-in-the-Wall Nature Trail**
   - Trailhead: Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center and Campground, 2 miles north of I-40 on Essex and Black Canyon roads.
   - This 6-mile round-trip hike connects to the Mid Hills to Hole-in-the-Wall Trail (see above).

7) **Barber Peak Loop Trail**
   - Trailhead: Hole-in-the-Wall picnic area.
   - Start: 3 miles west of Kelbaker Road on the well-graded, but unpaved Kelso Dunes Road. Parking is available on the road.

8) **Kelsa Dunes**
   - Start: near Hole-in-the-Wall Campground, passes the Ophir Cliffs, and returns to Hole-in-the-Wall via Barahene Canyon (Land the Rings Loop Trail—see above).

9) **Piute Creek**
   - Start: 4.5 miles east of Ivanpah Road on Hart Mine Road; left at fork, then 1 mile, left at fork, then 3.4 miles, crossing an earthen bench; left at fork, then 1 mile to road end. High clearance & four-wheel drive recommended.

10) **Keystone Canyon**
    - Start: 18 miles south of Nipton Road on Ivanpah Road, then 2.5 miles west on an unmarked dirt road. Bear left at the first fork, right at the second, then continue to a parking area. Four-wheel drive recommended.

11) **Caruthers Canyon**
    - Start: Primitive campsites in canyon: 5.5 miles west of Ivanpah Road on New York Mtns Road; left at fork, then 1 mile, right at fork, then 1 mile, then 1 mile, left at fork, then 1 mile, left at fork, then 1 mile to road end. High clearance & four-wheel drive recommended.

12) **Castle Peaks Corridor**
    - Start: 4.9 miles east of Ivanpah Road on Hart Mine Road; left at fork, then 1 mile, left at fork, then 3.4 miles, crossing an earthen bench; left at fork, then 1 mile to road end. High clearance & four-wheel drive recommended.

13) **Plute Creek**
    - Start: 9.5 miles east of the junction of Larson Valley and Cedar Canyon roads on a dirt utility road, then 0.5 miles north. High clearance & four-wheel drive recommended.

**Recommended Routes**

The following routes are not established trails; trailheads might be unidentifiable or nonexistent. Check a detailed map or guidebook and consult a park ranger for route information.

1) **Quail Basin**
   - Start: 12.5 miles north of I-40 on Kelbaker Road, then 3 miles east on an unmarked dirt road.

2) **Rings Loop Trail**
   - Trailhead: Hole-in-the-Wall Information Center parking area, 20 miles north of I-40 on Essex and Black Canyon roads.

3) **Mid Hills**
   - Start: 6 miles west of Hole-in-the-Wall Campground, passes the Ophir Cliffs, and returns to Hole-in-the-Wall via Barahene Canyon (Land the Rings Loop Trail—see above).

4) **Rock Spring Loop Trail**
   - Trailhead: 5 miles east of Black Canyon Road on Cedar Canyon Road.

5) **Teutonia Peak Trail**
   - Start: 3 miles west of Kelbaker Road on the well-graded, but unpaved Kelso Dunes Road.

**Camping and Hiking**

At 4,300 feet in elevation, the campground offers superb views of the surrounding desert. Six campites with tables and fire rings are available on a first-come, first-served basis for $25 per night. Water and flush toilets are provided.

Three short trails—the Mary Beale Nature Trail (0.5 miles round-trip), Nona Mora Trail (0.5 miles round-trip), and Crystal Spring Trail (2 miles round-trip)—offer an introduction to the area’s history, geology, and flora while providing outstanding views. Cross-country hikers can reach the peaks of the Providence Mountains. Groups planning to hike cross-country require a free permit from the visitor center.

For reservations and information, call 760-928-2586.