

Devils Tower

National Monument
Wyoming

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Over the Black Hills

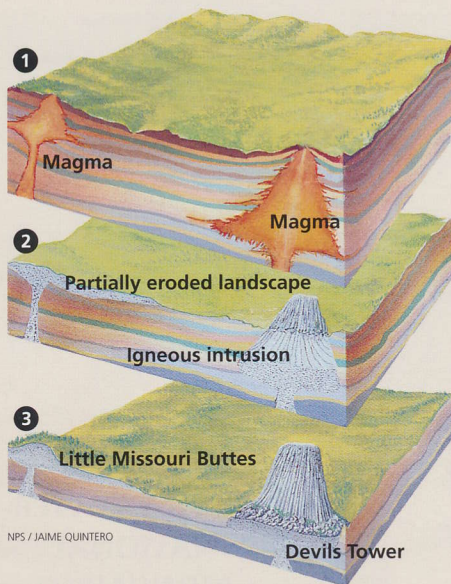
Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday, in *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969), describes Devils Tower "...upthrust against the gray sky as if in the birth of time the core of the earth had broken through its crust and the motion of the world was begun."

In 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed the Tower and over 1,000 surrounding acres a national monument. The new status prevented vandalism, the removal of objects, and unauthorized occupation or settlement. With a spring of pure, cold water near its base, the Tower attracted campers, picnickers, and climbers.

During the Great Depression the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) established a camp near the present Administration Building (*map, other side*). Workers built camping and picnicking facilities and the log buildings that house the visitor center and offices for the rangers and entrance station. They also improved the road to the base of the Tower and built a trail around the Tower.

Over 20 Indigenous tribes continue to maintain sacred narratives about the creation of Devils Tower. The Kiowa people say, "Eight children were there at play, seven sisters and their brother. Suddenly the boy was struck dumb; he trembled and began to run upon his hands and feet. His fingers became claws, and his body was covered with fur. Directly there was a bear where the boy had been. The sisters were terrified; they ran, and the bear after them. They came to the stump of a great tree, and the tree spoke to them. It bade them climb upon it, and as they did so it began to rise into the air. The bear came to kill them, but they were just beyond its reach. It reared against the tree and scored the bark all around with its claws.

The Geology Story



1 About 50 million years ago magma was forced into sedimentary rock above and cooled underground. As it cooled it contracted and fractured into columns. An earlier flow formed Little Missouri Buttes.

2 and **3** Over millions of years, erosion of sedimentary rock exposed Devils Tower and accentuated Little Missouri Buttes. The Tower rises 867 feet from its base, 1,267 feet above the river, and 5,112 feet above sea level. The area of its teardrop-shaped top is 1.5 acres. The diameter of its base is 1,000 feet.

The seven sisters were borne into the sky, and they became the stars of the Pleiades."

Bear Lodge is one of the many names Native Americans gave the Tower. Col. Richard Dodge named it Devils Tower in 1875. He led the military expedition to confirm reports of gold in the Black Hills and survey the area. Scientists then thought Devils Tower was the core of

an ancient volcano. More recent data suggest it is an igneous intrusion (*left*).

On July 4, 1893, with fanfare and over 1,000 spectators, William Rogers and Willard Ripley made the "first" ascent, using a wooden ladder for the first 350 feet. The fact that there was already a flagpole for raising Old Glory atop the Tower suggests the first ascent might have been one day earlier. The climbers' wives ran the refreshment stand and sold pieces of the flag as souvenirs. The Tower became a Fourth of July meeting place for ranching families who might see each other only once a year. At the annual picnic in 1895, Mrs. Rogers used her husband's ladder to become the first woman to reach the summit. Records of Tower climbs have been kept since 1937. Five thousand climbers come every year from all over the world to climb on the massive columns. Over 220 climbing routes have been used.

The monument includes more than the Tower—Black Hills pine forests, rolling plains, and grasslands. You can see every phase in the process of establishing a forest—from bare rock to pines. Because mountains and plains converge here, over 150 birds species have been counted, including hawks, bald and golden eagles, prairie falcon, turkey vulture, turkey, and American kestrel. The brightness of the male mountain bluebird, the industriousness of the nuthatch, and the feistiness of the black-billed magpie are hard to miss.

Wild turkey
NPS / LEAH WILSON



Devils Tower

Getting Here The park is open year-round. The entrance is 33 miles northeast of Moorcroft, WY; 27 miles northwest of Sundance, WY, via US 14; and 52 miles southwest of Belle Fourche, SD, via SD 34/WY 24. Airlines serve Gillette, WY, and Rapid City, SD.

Visitor Center The visitor center includes a bookstore and exhibits. Activities are offered Memorial Day through Labor Day. Parking is limited in summer. For bookstore information contact Devils Tower Natural History Association, www.devilstowernha.org.

Hiking Trails The paved Tower Trail offers close-up views and outdoor exhibits that tell the Tower's story. Pets are prohibited on trails. Trail lengths: Tower Trail 1.7 mi., Red Beds Trail 2.9 mi., South Side Trail 0.6 mi., Joyner Ridge Trail 1.5 mi., Valley View Trail 0.6 mi.

Climbing Park in the lower, gravel parking lot. Self-register at the climber kiosk before your climb and when you return. Climbing is inherently dangerous. Be prepared for rapidly changing conditions. Research your route and descent options before leaving the ground.

Wear a climbing helmet. Be prepared for sudden storms; carry rain gear and a headlamp. For climbing rules and regulations visit the climber kiosk or contact the climbing office at 307-467-5283, ext. 632. Expect seasonal raptor closures in spring and summer. There is a voluntary climbing closure in June out of respect for Indigenous cultural beliefs. Please do not disturb prayer offerings.

Accessibility We strive to make facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to the visitor center, call, or check the park website.

Safety and Regulations Obey all posted signs. • Park only in designated parking areas. • Watch for rattlesnakes. Snakes seldom bite unless disturbed. • Pets are allowed on paved roads, in parking lots, and in the campground; they must be leashed at all times. Pets are not allowed on trails. • For firearms regulations check the park website. • Federal laws protect all natural and cultural features, including animals, plants, and rocks. • Stay on trails; do not use shortcuts. • Using remotely piloted aircraft like drones is prohibited.

Camping and Facilities Open May 15–October 15, the Belle Fourche River Campground has RV and tent sites (first-come, first-served) and three group sites. Each campsite has a grill, picnic table, and nearby potable water. Restrooms are accessible. There are no hookups, showers, or laundry facilities. Camping is not permitted outside the campground.

More Information

Devils Tower National Monument
PO Box 10
Devils Tower, WY 82714-0010
307-467-5283
www.nps.gov/deto

Use the official NPS App to guide your visit.

Devils Tower National Monument is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more see www.nps.gov.

 **National Park Foundation.**
Join the park community.
www.nationalparks.org

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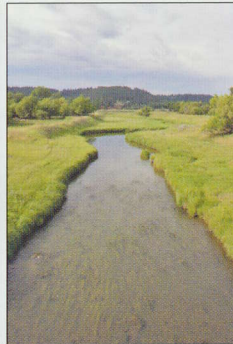


How do new forests grow? Lichen and moss colonize bare rock; next come grasses and flowering plants like arrowleaf balsamroot, shrubs, and trees.



Black-tailed prairie dogs live in their town near the park entrance. The young pups are playful, but keep your distance.

Do not approach or feed prairie dogs. They can bite and carry plague!

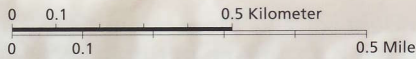


The Belle Fourche River carved most of the landscape that exposed Devils Tower. In the 1700s French fur trappers named it the "pretty fork river."



White-tailed deer may visit the campground at dawn or dusk. You may see other animals including porcupines, chipmunks, cottontail rabbits, and mule deer.

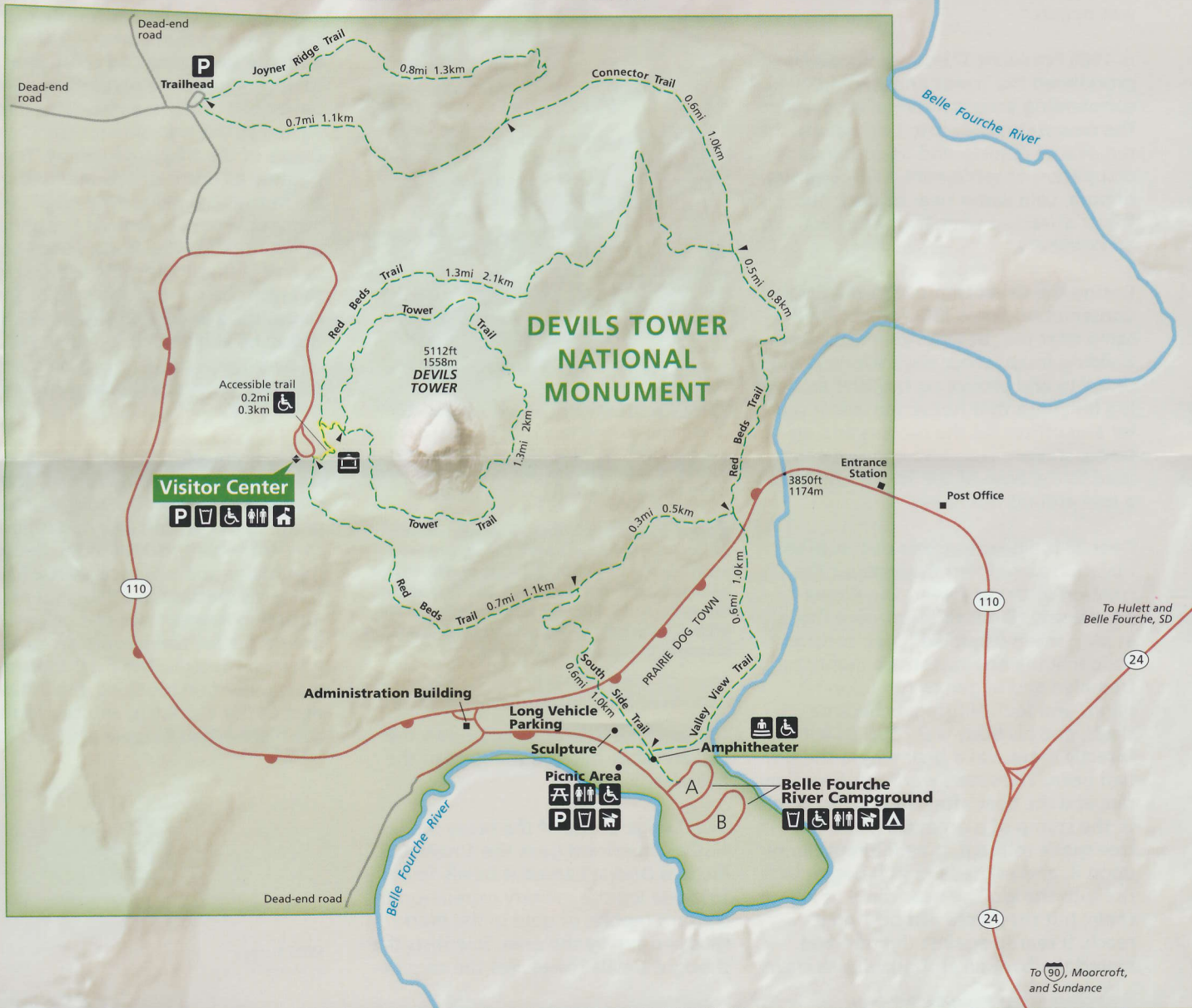
Birds abound: vultures, jays, bluebirds, robins, chickadees, meadowlarks, woodpeckers, and hawks.



- Hiking trail
- Unpaved road
- Parking area or turnout
- 0.3mi 0.5km Distance indicator

- Parking
- Campground
- Pavilion
- Amphitheater
- Pet-friendly area

- Ranger station
- Wheelchair-accessible
- Restrooms
- Drinking water



To 90, Moorcroft, and Sundance