



# Foundation Document Overview

## Devils Tower National Monument

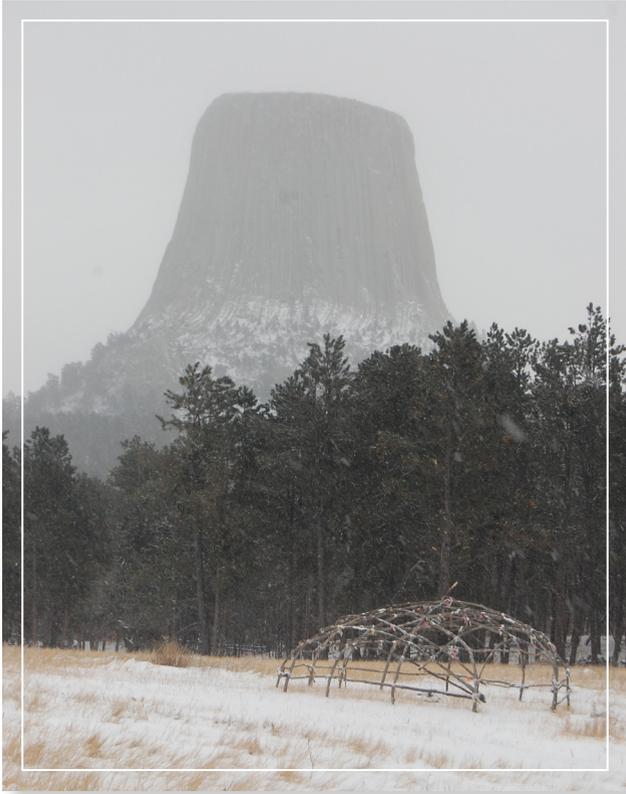
### Wyoming



#### Contact Information

For more information about the *Devils Tower National Monument Foundation Document*, contact: [deto\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:deto_superintendent@nps.gov) or (307) 467-5283 or write to: Superintendent, Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming 110, Devils Tower, WY 82714

## Purpose



*The purpose of DEVILS TOWER NATIONAL MONUMENT, also known to many as Bear Lodge, is to protect and preserve a world class geologic and sacred landmark that has shaped thousands of years of American Indian culture and the history of the northern Great Plains.*



## Significance

Significance statements express why Devils Tower National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Devils Tower is a monolith of phonolite porphyry, a rare igneous rock. With more than 1,200 feet of prominence above the surrounding landscape, it is the iconic natural landmark in the northern Great Plains. It has many visually stunning, symmetrical, columnar joints, which are the tallest and the widest of their kind in the world.
- Devils Tower is sacred to many American Indians. Their histories are rich with oral stories and astronomical and ecological knowledge tied to Bear Lodge.
- Devils Tower's unique columns and vertical cracks make it one of the premier areas in the world for rock climbing. It boasts more than a century of colorful climbing history.
- At Devils Tower, mountain and northern plains species converge to create an ecological zone distinctive to the Black Hills.
- Devils Tower National Monument is the world's first national monument. In choosing Devils Tower as the first place to be protected by the 1906 Antiquities Act, President Theodore Roosevelt broadened the intended use of the act by including both its scientific and cultural significance.



## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Devils Tower Formation**
- **American Indian Spiritual Values and Opportunity for Personal Reflection**

Devils Tower National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Cultural Resources**
- **Opportunities for Visitor Enjoyment**
- **Diversity of Ecological Communities**
- **Remote Setting (Night Skies, Viewsheds, and Soundscapes)**

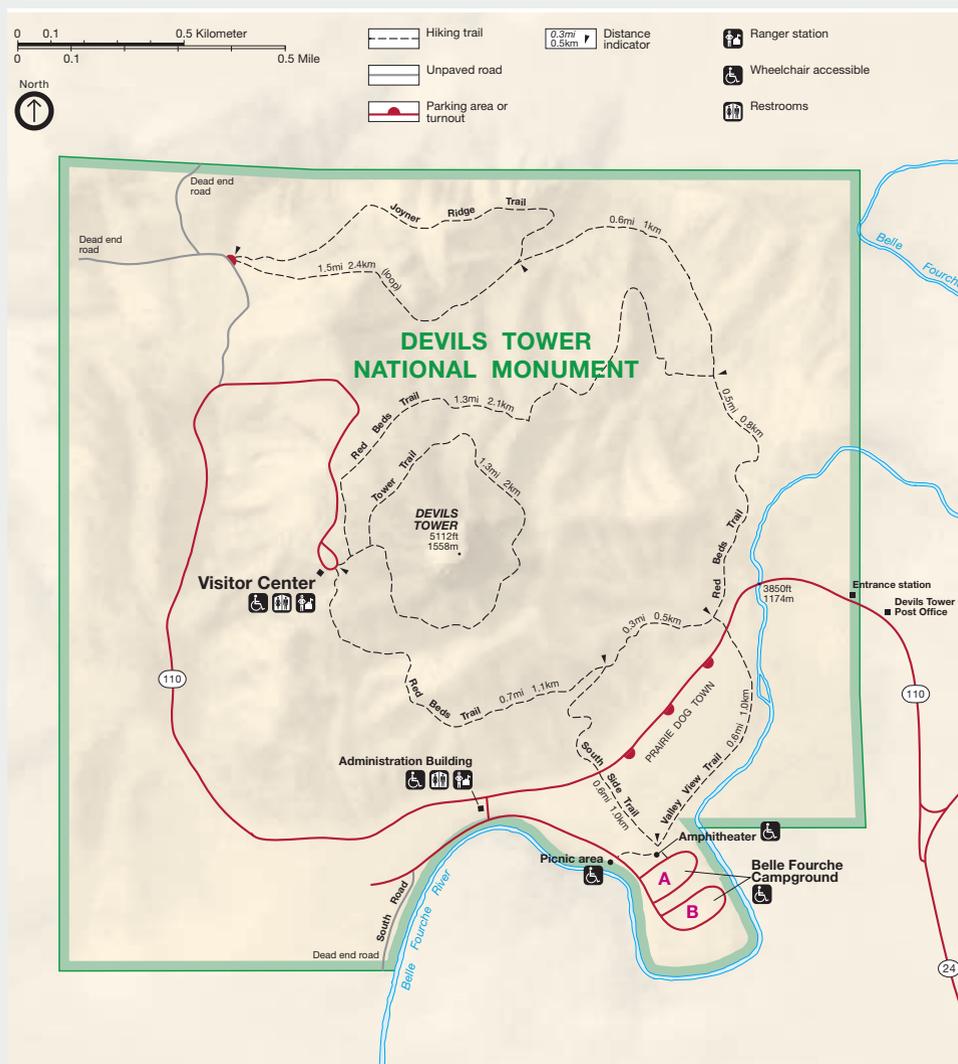
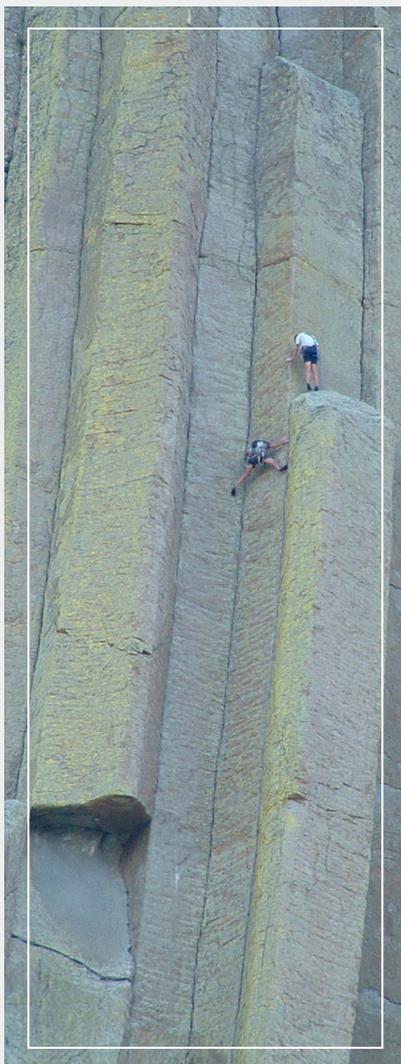


## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Proclaimed by President Theodore Roosevelt as America's first national monument, Devils Tower exemplifies the challenges of managing and protecting public places and significant cultural properties shared by many people in numerous ways to provide the greatest benefit for all.
- The variety of theories regarding how Devils Tower came to be offer opportunities to learn and experience how affiliated cultures, scientists, and others understand and respect this special place.
- Devils Tower, a universally recognized landmark, entices us to explore and define our place in the natural and cultural world.
- The dramatic and alluring character of Devils Tower evokes a powerful sense of wonder, prompting many forms of personal expression that nourish our relationship with the land and universe.
- The phenomenal height, rock quality, and hundreds of long cracks of Devils Tower provide an environment for many climbers to challenge their physical and mental limits and gain experiences that are powerful and rewarding.
- In the late 1800s, pioneers and ranchers settled the area surrounding Devils Tower. It continues to be at the center of the cultural, historical, economic, and social activities of the local communities.
- Devils Tower and the Black Hills have long been, and continue to be, living places that are integral to the cultural and spiritual identity of the affiliated tribes.
- Devils Tower is an ecologically unique and diverse area, where flora, fauna, other natural resources, and natural processes and their relationships to each other are preserved through a variety of careful management actions.
- The expansive views, dark night skies, and natural sounds of Devils Tower National Monument provide opportunities for visitors to experience nature and solitude.
- The many Indian names for this rock formation reflect the profound cultural identities of one of the most outstanding and recognizable natural features on the northern Great Plains.

# Description



Located on the northwest edge of the Black Hills in northeastern Wyoming, Devils Tower is one of the most conspicuous geologic features of the Black Hills region—a rocky sentinel rising 1,267 feet above the Belle Fourche River and the surrounding grasslands and ponderosa pine forests. American Indians, fur trappers, explorers, and settlers alike were awed by the majesty of Devils Tower. Also known in numerous tribal traditions as Bear Lodge, Devils Tower is a sacred site for Northern Plains Indian tribes (see appendix A for a list of tribes with cultural affiliation with the monument). They have held sacred ceremonies near this remarkable geologic formation for thousands of years. From the earliest native peoples to local ranchers and settlers, Devils Tower has been a gathering place, a place of community, and a place of refuge. Many share their stories about Devils Tower from generation to generation.

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed Devils Tower the nation's first national monument under the Antiquities Act. Today, the 1,347-acre monument attracts well over 400,000 visitors annually. American Indian people come to the site drawn by sacred and spiritual traditions. Rock climbers visit from around the world to scale the tower itself—hundreds of parallel cracks make the tower one of the finest traditional crack climbing areas in North America. Families, bikers, and artists alike come to be inspired by the tower's otherworldly qualities, impossible proportions, and serene setting.