

FACILITIES AND FEATURES

Sight-seeing and relaxing outdoors are the main attractions at Cathedral Gorge. The Miller Point Overlook has outstanding views of buff-colored canyons, cliffs and spires.

Camping: The campground has 22 sites, each with a table, grill and shade ramada. Sites cannot be reserved. Water and flush rest rooms with showers are open year-around. Facilities adjacent to the campground offer large shade ramadas, grills, picnic tables and water. There are two handicapped-accessible campsites at the group area, plus a rest room with flush toilets and showers. Contact the Visitor Center for reservations.

Picnicking: The day-use picnic area has a large shade ramada with three picnic tables.

Group Area: Accommodations for day and overnight groups are available by reservation.

Trails: The remote portions of the park are accessible via a four-mile loop trail. Another one-mile trail connects the Miller Point overlook to the picnic area.

Regional Visitor Center: The center is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. It is located at the park entrance off U.S. 93. The center is closed holidays during the winter.

REMINDERS

Please join the majority of our visitors who maintain this area and preserve the fragile desert environment by observing these rules:

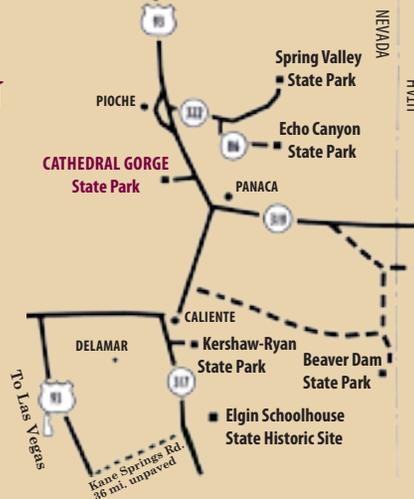
- ♦ Practice Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly principles.
- ♦ Stay on trails.
- ♦ Drive only on designated roadways. Vehicles must be licensed.
- ♦ Keep pets on a leash no longer than six feet.
- ♦ Plants, animals, fossils other natural objects and artifacts are protected by state and federal laws.
- ♦ Camp only in designated sites.
- ♦ Light fires only in the fire rings and grills provided.
- ♦ Quiet hours are 10 p.m. – 7 a.m.
- ♦ Fees are charged for park entrance, camping and group use. A fee schedule is posted in the park. Visitors are responsible for knowing park regulations, which are posted in the park.

CATHEDRAL GORGE STATE PARK

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LOCATION

Cathedral Gorge is 10 miles south of Pioche and 15 miles north of Caliente on U.S. 93. The entrance to the park is one mile north of the intersection of U.S. Highway 93 and State Route 319.



DIVISION OF STATE PARKS

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PARK ORIGIN & HISTORY

Close to 2000 acres of land that was once home to the Fremont, Anasazi and Southern Paiutes, is now a state park preserved for visitors to experience and enjoy. In 1924, Governor James Scrugham set aside the area for preservation. Cathedral Gorge became one of Nevada's first four state parks in 1935.

The original picnicking facilities built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s are still in use today. The stone water tower and the stone rest room facility seen when entering the park's day-use area, also constructed by the CCC, are no longer in use.

GEOLOGY

The spires and buff-colored cliffs are the result of geologic processes occurring over tens of millions of years. The beauty enjoyed today had violent beginnings, starting with explosive volcanic activity that, with each eruption, deposited layers of ash hundreds of feet thick. The source of this ash, the Caliente Caldera Complex, lies to the south of Cathedral Gorge.

About five million years after the eruptions ceased, block faulting, a fracture in the bedrock that allows the two sides to move opposite each other, shaped the mountains and valleys prevalent in Nevada today. This faulting formed a depression, now known as Meadow Valley.

Over time, the depression filled with water creating a freshwater lake. Continual rains eroded the exposed ash and pumice left from the volcanic activity, and the streams carried the eroded sediment into the newly formed lake. The formations, made of silt, clay and volcanic ash, are the remnants of that lake. As the landscape changed and more block faulting occurred, water drained from the lake exposing the

volcanic ash sediments to the wind and rain, causing erosion of the soft material called Bentonite clay.

VEGETATION

The park's arid terrain, where wind and water erode rocks and soils a rapid rate that vegetation cannot grow on the outcroppings. The vegetation free slopes stand in stark contrast to the valley floor where primrose and Indian ricegrass hold small sand dunes in place.

In the middle of the valley, clay, sand and gravel create a soil favored by narrow leaf yucca, juniper trees, barberry sagebrush, greasewood, white sage, shad scale and four-winged saltbush. Rabbit brush grows in areas along the roadsides and walkways.

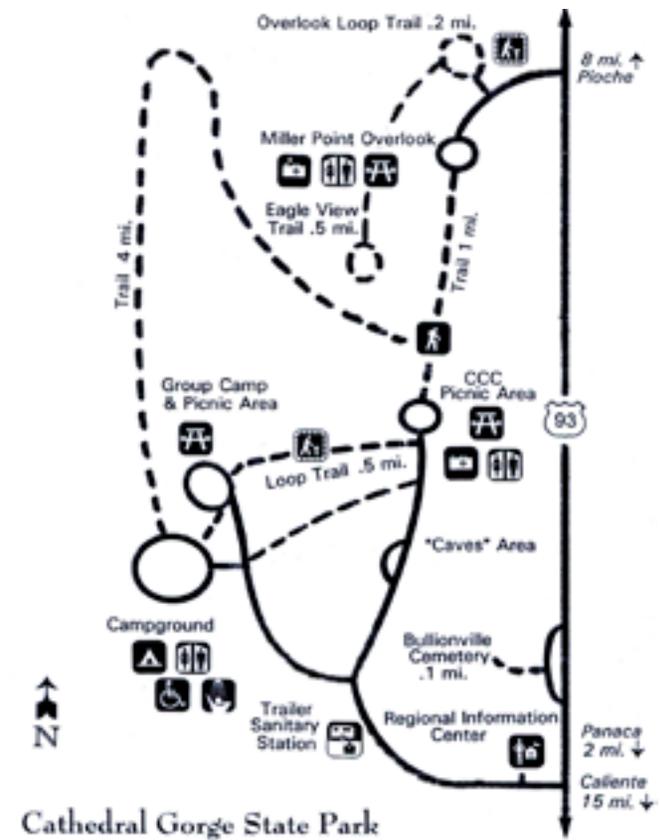
As you walk, the trails look for dark, bumpy patches around rocks and other plants. This is Cryptobiotic soil. This desert glue is alive with lichens, mosses, algae, microfungi, and bacteria. Cryptobiotic soil crusts help stabilize the soil by reducing wind and water erosion. These microcosms are fragile, easily damaged if disturbed and can take 100 years to recover from damage.

WILDLIFE

During your stay, be on the lookout for black-tailed jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, packrats, kangaroo rats, mice and gophers.

Animals with more nocturnal habits, like mule deer, coyotes, kit foxes and skunks may be seen in the evening or early morning hours, but later in the day their tracks may be seen in the sand. Several species of non-poisonous lizards and snakes are abundant spring through fall and you may even spot a rattlesnake.

Birds are plentiful, and it is common to see ravens, kestrels, robins, sapsuckers,



Cathedral Gorge State Park

flycatchers and sparrows around the park. You may even catch a glimpse of Nevada's state bird, the Mountain Bluebird, a red-tailed hawk or golden eagle.

CLIMATE

Sitting at 4,800 feet, the area is typically arid with hot summers and cold winters. Summer temperatures range from 95 degrees F at mid-day to 55 degrees F at night. Rainfall is variable and thunderstorms are common.

