

# CLIMATE

Sitting at 4,800 feet, the area is typically arid with hot summers and cold winters. Average temperatures range from 95°F (35°C) at mid-day to 55°F (13°C) at night in the summer and 45°F (7°C) to 19°F (-7°C) in the winter. Rainfall varies and thunderstorms are common in late summer.

## DIVISION OF STATE PARKS

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# CATHEDRAL GORGE STATE PARK

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February 2019

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# PARK HISTORY

Close to 2,000 acres of land that was once home to the Fremont 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 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 rest room facility in the park’s day-use area, also constructed by the CCC, are no longer in use.

# GEOLOGY

Volcanoes, earthquakes, water, and erosion created the spires and buff-colored cliffs of Cathedral Gorge. Modern day erosion continues to sculpt the formations and deeply incised canyons, but the geologic processes that produced the badlands landscape occurred over tens of millions of years. If you were in the Gorge 2.5 million years ago you would have needed gills. The landscape you see today is the remains of a Pliocene era freshwater lake. The variation in layers of rock and sediment tell the story of fluctuating lake levels and the flow of rivers and streams that deposited slit and clay (altered volcanic ash) into the lake. The source of this ash, the Caliente Caldera Complex, lies to the south of Cathedral Gorge.

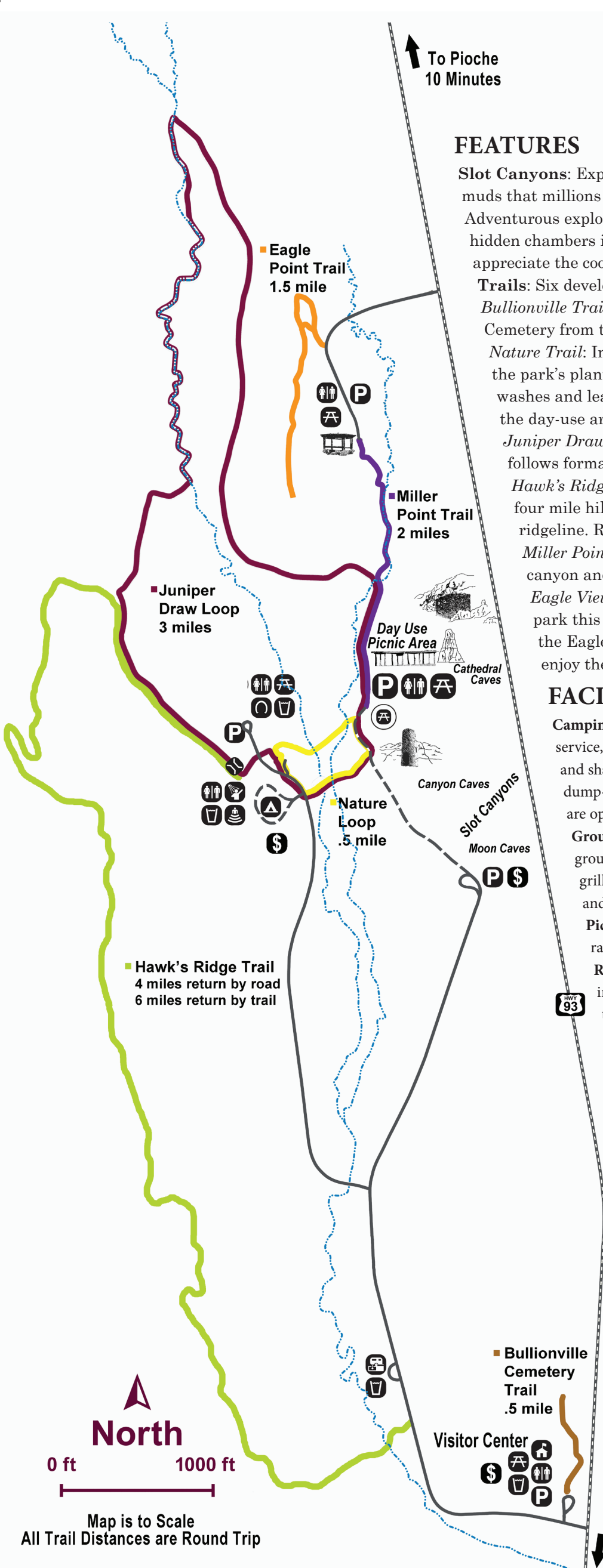


# VEGETATION

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, yucca, juniper trees, and sage grow in the sand and gravel. Those dark, bumpy patches around rocks and other plants is Cryptobiotic soil. This desert glue is alive with lichens, mosses, algae, microfungi, and bacteria. Cryptobiotic soil crust stabilizes the soil by reducing wind and water erosion. These microcosms are easily damaged if disturbed and can take 100 years to recover from damage.

# WILDLIFE

During your stay, be on the lookout for lizards, black-tailed jackrabbits, and cottontail rabbits. Animals with more nocturnal habits, like kangaroo rats, mule deer, coyotes, and kit foxes may be seen in the evening or early morning hours; later in the day their tracks may be seen in the sand. Snakes appear spring through fall, brightly colored gopher snakes are seen most often, but occasionally you may even spot a Great Basin Rattlesnake (only venomous snake in the area). Birds are plentiful, and it is common to see ravens, hawks, flycatchers and sparrows around the park. You may even catch a glimpse of a golden eagle or Nevada’s state bird—the Mountain Bluebird.



## FEATURES

**Slot Canyons:** Explore the narrow canyons cut deep into the old muds that millions of years ago were at the bottom of the lake. Adventurous explorers can crawl through tunnels to discover hidden chambers in the network of canyons. All explorers will appreciate the coolness of the canyons in the summer heat.

**Trails:** Six developed trails highlight areas of the park.

*Bullionville Trail:* Easy .05 mile walk up to the Bullionville Cemetery from the Visitor Center.

*Nature Trail:* Interpretative signs along the way tell about the park's plants and animals. This easy .05 loop crosses two washes and leads from the campground to the slot canyons in the day-use area.

*Juniper Draw Loop:* Flat and sandy, this three mile loop follows formations around the valley floor.

*Hawk's Ridge Trail:* From the Juniper Draw Trail, this four mile hike climbs up to the west ridge and follows the ridgeline. Return is on the park road.

*Miller Point Trail:* A moderate two mile trail through a canyon and up a series of stairs to Miller Point.

*Eagle View Trail:* Offering a bird's eye view of the entire park this 1.6 mile round-trip trail follows a ridge line to the Eagle Viewpoint where you can sit on a bench and enjoy the scenery.

## FACILITIES

**Camping:** The campground has 24 sites with 50-amp electric service, two are handicapped accessible; all include a table, grill and shade ramada. Water is available in the park and at the dump-station. Restrooms with hot showers and flush toilets are open year-round. Sites cannot be reserved.

**Group Areas:** Two sites accommodate day or overnight groups of 70 or less. Facilities include large shade ramadas, grills, picnic tables, water and restrooms with flush toilets and hot showers. Sites are reservation only.

**Picnicking:** The day-use picnic area has a large shade ramada with picnic tables, water, and a vault toilet.

**Regional Visitor Center:** Visitors can obtain information and buy souvenirs at the center located at the park's entrance off U.S. 93. Summer hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. During the winter the center is closed holidays and hours vary.

## REMINDERS

Make everyone's stay a pleasant one, remember:

- Visitors are responsible for knowing park regulations, which are posted in the park.
- Fees are charged for park entrance, camping and group use.
- Pets are welcome! Please keep them on a leash no longer than six feet.
- Stay on trails.
- Drive only on designated roadways. Vehicles must be licensed.
- Camp only in designated sites.
- Quiet hours are 10 p.m. – 7 a.m.
- Light fires only in the fire rings and grills provided.
- Plants, animals, fossils, and artifacts are protected by state and federal laws.