



Discover Grand Teton

Discover ... History

Discover ... Geology

Discover ... Wildlife

11,000 Years of Use

The Earliest Visitors

Archeologists suggest that ancient people began to use the valley 11,000 years ago. They used the area from spring to fall, but left when winter arrived.

Days of Mountain Men

By the 1820s, mountain men began to arrive. They trapped beaver and other animals for their fur. Jackson Hole, or the valley at the base of the Teton Range, was named for a mountain man, David E. Jackson.

Early Settlers

Isolation and climate kept most people from living in the valley until the late 19th century. Early settlers harvested hay, oats and raised cattle. Life was hard and some barely managed to survive.

The "Dudes"

Dudes were wealthy visitors from the east who traveled to the valley to experience "western life." They were some of the first tourists to the area that is now Grand Teton National Park.

A National Park for All

Many people worked for years so that this wonderful place could be protected. Today visitors from all over the world come to this area for the beautiful mountains, wildlife and outdoor activities.



Creation of a National Park

Did you know that Grand Teton National Park was established in both 1929 and 1950? When Congress and President Calvin Coolidge created the park in February of 1929 it was much smaller than it is today. The 96,000 acre park included only the Teton Range and six lakes at the base of the mountains.

In 1943 President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Jackson Hole National Monument which protected the valley at the base of the Teton Range. The 210,000 acre monument included federal lands and a generous 35,000 acre donation by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

On September 14, 1950 Congress and President Harry S. Truman created a "new" Grand Teton National Park. The existing national park was combined with the national monument, creating the 310,000 acre park we know today.

Grand Teton National Park is famous for beautiful mountain scenery and wildlife. Along with the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, Yellowstone National Park and several national forests, Grand Teton is part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. It is one of the most wildlife-rich areas in the world. Elk, moose, pronghorn, bison and bears are just some of the animals that call this place home.



Since August 25, 1916, when President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Park Service Organic Act creating the National Park Service, the mission of the National Park Service has been to let people enjoy the parks and to preserve them for future generations.

Today the National Park Service preserves and protects over 400 sites covering more than 83 million acres in 49 States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan, and the Virgin Islands. What is the nearest National Park Service site near you? Go to www.nps.gov to find out!

1929
1950

Year Grand Teton National Park was established and year the park increased in size

310,000
485

Size of Grand Teton National Park in acres and in square miles

3
Million

Number of visitors to Grand Teton National Park each year

Seasons In the Range



Spring

Mild days and cold nights with rain and occasional snow.

Summer

Warm days and cool nights, afternoon thunderstorms are common.

Fall

Sunny days and cold nights with rain and occasional snow.

Winter

Snow blankets the mountains and valley. Between storms the days are sunny and the nights are very cold with below zero temperatures.



The Teton Range receives 450 inches of snow each year. November, December and January are the wettest months.

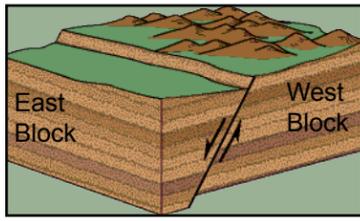


Snow = Water = Life

During the winter months the mountains store water in the form of snow and ice. At the end of the long winter, the snow and ice melt and drain from the mountains as water. As the snowmelt runs into lakes and rivers it helps plant life to grow, which provides food for wildlife.



Teton Geology



A fault forms and begins to build the mountains



Ice age glaciers change the landscape dramatically



An aerial view of today's landscape



The jagged peaks of the Cathedral Group (Grand Teton, Mt. Owen and Teewinot)



Schoolroom Glacier is one of the existing glaciers in the park

Building a Mountain Range

Millions of years ago, stretching of the Earth's crust caused a fault, or crack, to form. Over millions of years, earthquakes up to magnitude 7.5 shook the land. The blocks of land on either side of the fault slipped past one another. This caused the west block to swing up forming the mountains and the east block to drop down forming the valley called Jackson Hole.

Changing the Face of the Range

Beginning less than two million years ago, the Earth's climate cooled and glaciers (rivers of ice and snow) began to form. These glaciers sculpted the land. Ice up to 3,500 feet thick flowed south across the valley floor. Glaciers flowed slowly down the mountains, carving U-shaped canyons and jagged peaks like the Grand Teton. At the base of the U-shaped canyons the ice carved out basins that are small lakes today.

Today's Landscape

Today the highest peak, the Grand Teton, rises 13,770 feet above sea level. The last earthquake happened about 5,000 to 7,000 years ago but the fault could still become active again. Imagine a rubber band stretched to its limit; sooner or later it will break. There are about ten glaciers in the park today, but climate change is causing them to shrink. The forces that shaped Grand Teton National Park are still at work, mountains will continue to rise, while wind, water and ice will continue to wear down the mountains as part of a never-ending story.

Weather in Grand Teton

The chart below is from data collected at Moose, Wyoming from 12/1958 to 12/2001.

Month	Average Maximum Temperature (Degrees F)	Average Minimum Temperature (Degrees F)	Average Precipitation (Inches)	Average Snow (Inches)	Average Snow Depth (Inches)
January	26	1	3.00	45	28
February	31	4	2.00	31	34
March	40	12	1.60	21	32
April	49	22	1.50	9	13
May	61	31	2.00	3	0
June	71	37	1.80	0.1	0
July	80	41	1.20	0	0
August	79	40	1.40	0	0
September	69	32	1.5	0.5	0
October	56	23	1.25	4.5	0
November	38	14	2	25	2.5
December	26	1.5	2.5	39	16

93°F
-66°F

Record high and low temperatures in Grand Teton

450 in.
191 in.

Average snowfall in the mountains and in the valley

8
13,770 ft.

Peaks over 12,000 feet and elevation of Grand Teton, the highest peak

Explore Park Communities

A community is much like the neighborhood you live in; it is a group of plants and animals living and interacting with one another. Within these communities, the area where a plant or animal finds food, water and shelter is called its habitat. Over 1,000 species of plants, 60 species of mammals and 300 species of birds can be found in different communities in Grand Teton National Park.



Alpine

At the highest part of the mountain, above tree line (about 10,000 feet), plants adapt to wind, snow, and lack of soil by growing close to the ground. Wildflowers such as alpine forget-me-not, sky pilot and subalpine buttercup grow here. Animals such as bighorn sheep and pikas can be found in the alpine community.



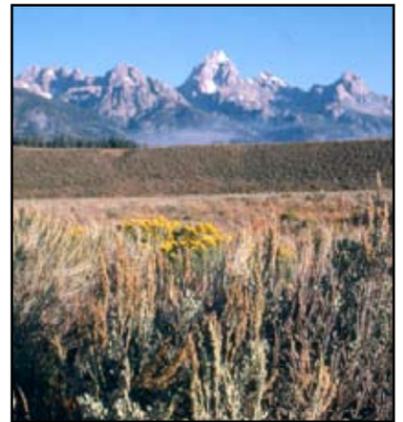
Forest

Trees provide important habitat for wildlife. Wildlife such as elk and wolves seek the forest for shade and shelter during the hot summer days. Most of the trees in the park are conifers (cone-bearing trees with needle-like leaves) such as lodgepole pine. Deciduous trees (trees that lose their leaves at the end of the growing season) such as aspens and cottonwoods can also be found.



Wetlands

Ponds and lakes provide a variety of habitat in and around them. There are many wetlands, marshes and swamps in the park. Plants such as pond lilies, willows and cattails supply wildlife with food and shelter. Wildlife such as moose and beavers browse in areas where the water meets the land. Almost all wildlife gains some benefits from wetland communities.



Sagebrush

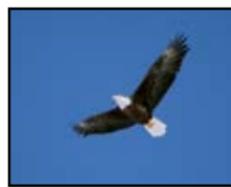
Sagebrush covers most of the valley floor. Sagebrush, a low silver-green bush, does not need much water and grows well in the warm and dry valley soils. Although sagebrush is primarily eaten by pronghorn and sage grouse, it provides important habitat by creating shelter for many other types of wildlife.

Who am I?

From large to small, wildlife can be found in all park communities. Can you guess the animals described below? Match up the picture with the description.

a) I live in alpine communities. I am a small rabbit-like animal that lives in rocky places. You may hear my alarm call, “enk! enk!” before you see me.
I am a _____

Uinta Ground Squirrel



Bald Eagle

e) I live in wetland communities. I am the largest member of the deer family. I may be seen standing in ponds on my long legs looking for underwater plants to eat.
I am a _____

b) I live in sagebrush communities. I am the fastest land mammal in North America. I can run as fast as 70 mph! I have short horns with prongs and a white belly.
I am a _____

Elk



Pronghorn

f) I live in alpine communities. I am an expert mountain climber. I eat small grasses and wildflowers that grow above tree line. I have large curved horns.
I am a _____

c) I live in wetland communities. I feed mainly on fish and ducks. I use trees for perching and nesting. My wing span can be up to seven feet across.
I am a _____

Pika



Bighorn Sheep

g) I live in forest communities in small herds in the summer. At dawn and dusk I go to the edge of the trees to eat grasses and other plants in the meadows.
I am an _____

d) I live in forest communities. I am always looking for good things to eat like ants and berries. I come in many colors and can weigh up to 400 pounds.
I am a _____

Moose



Black Bear

h) I live in sagebrush communities. I make tunnels in the rocky soil for my home. I resemble a prairie dog, but I am smaller and faster.
I am an _____



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How You Can Help!

Get up! Get busy! Show you care about your home, your neighborhood and your national parks.

Keep Animals Wild

Keep a safe distance from wildlife and do not feed wild animals. Human food can make animals sick and more aggressive.

Enjoy Flowers and Rocks

Enjoy wildflowers and rocks, but leave them where they are for others to enjoy. Get your hands dirty and experience gardening in your neighborhood.

Stay on Trails

Stay on trails to protect plant and animal communities.

Stash Your Trash

Pick up your trash or litter; help out by throwing away trash others have left behind.

Don't Be a Drip

Less than 1% of the water on Earth can be used by people. It is important that we use our water wisely.

Lights Out

Saving energy is as simple as turning off a light or trying a new energy-saving bulb.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Think before you throw something away; **reduce** what you use, **reuse** what you can and **recycle** what cannot be reused.

Kid Power

Ride a bike, take a hike! It helps you and the Earth stay healthy. When you use kid power you create no pollution.

Explore. Learn. Protect.

Get outdoors! Visit and explore the national parks that belong to you! Become a Junior Ranger to discover the parks' treasures and become a protector of the national park system. Get involved with the parks. For more information go to www.nps.gov



National Park Service
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Student Study Guide

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www.nps.gov/grte
www.nps.gov/grte/forkids/index.htm

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.