

Eastern Sierra Nevada & Northern Mojave Desert Recreation Information Update December 14 - 20, 2011

Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center

Junction of US HWY 395 & SR 136
Lone Pine, California 93545

(760) 876-6222
TDD 876-6228

Open Daily: 8:00am to 5:00pm

ROADS: Major Eastern Sierra roads are open, including US 395. Trans Sierra roads - SR 120 (Tioga Pass), SR 108 (Sonora Pass) and SR 4 (Ebbets Pass) are closed due to snow. SR 89 (Monitor Pass) is open. Weather and road conditions can change rapidly this time of year; mountain passes and roads are subject to immediate controls and/or closures. Drivers headed to the mountains need to be sure their vehicles are equipped with chains, including those with snowtires. Call 1-800-427-ROAD (1-800-427-7623) or visit the website at www.dot.ca.gov, for California highway conditions and construction schedules. For Nevada roads, call 1-877-NVROADS (1-877-687-6237) or visit the web at www.nevadadot.com.

BODIE STATE HISTORIC PARK road (SR270) is open. Mono Mills road (SR 120) and June Lake Loop (SR 158) are open. Rock Creek is open to the pack station. In Bishop Creek, SR 168 is open to Aspendell and the South Lake road is open to Bishop Creek Lodge. In the White Mountains, the paved road to the **ANCIENT BRISTLECONE PINE FOREST AND SCHULMAN GROVE** is open; the White Mountain dirt road is open with snow, 4x4 required. Big Pine Canyon is open to the trailhead.

Major highways through **DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK** are open. The Big Pine, Titus Canyon, Salt Creek, Devils Golf Course and West Side dirt roads are open. The Upper Wildrose road is icy to the Charcoal Kilns, with snow to Mahogany Flat. The North Saline Valley road is open; 4x4 high clearance vehicles recommended. The South Pass into Saline Valley is posted closed by Inyo County (4x4 high clearance vehicles required). Rangers ask visitors traveling to remote locations to leave a complete itinerary at home, obtain a good backcountry road map and be prepared for the unexpected. Drivers need to be sure their vehicle is in good condition and to carry an additional spare tire, extra gas, food and water. For backcountry roads information, check the website at www.nps.gov/deva ("Plan Your Visit/Things To Do/Outdoor Activities) and the Morning Report for current conditions.

WEATHER: Weak high pressure over California Wednesday will produce sunny skies with cool temperatures in the Eastern Sierra and Northern Mojave regions. A weak Pacific storm system will move over California Thursday, resulting in gusty winds, with a chance of snow showers over the mountains through Friday morning. The system is expected to stall over Northern Mexico this weekend, producing high clouds, some gusty winds and cool temperatures. Highs have been in the lower 20s in the mountains, upper 40s in the Owens Valley and mid 60s in Death Valley, with the lows ranging from single digits in the mountains, to the mid 30s in Death Valley.

CAMPGROUNDS: **INYO COUNTY** campgrounds are open. The **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT** campgrounds at Tuttle Creek (fee/no water) and the Pleasant Valley Pit (fee/no water) are open. Additional privately operated campgrounds & RV facilities are open throughout the area.

INYO NATIONAL FOREST, Lone Pine to Lee Vining - the following campgrounds are open: Lone Pine (no water/no fee), Bitterbrush (no water/no fee) and Holiday in Rock Creek (no water/no fee).

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK - Yosemite Valley campgrounds have sites open and reservable. Reservations are accepted five months in advance on the 15th of each month, for a one-month block through www.recreation.gov; or call 1-877-444-6777. Sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis at Wawona (SR 41 south of Yosemite Valley), Hodgdon Meadows (SR 120, near Big Oak Flat) and Camp Four walk-in campground in Yosemite Valley. For information, visit the web site at www.nps.gov/yose.

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, open sites include: Furnace Creek, Sunset, Texas Spring, Stovepipe Wells, Mesquite Springs, Emigrant (tent only/ no fee) and Wildrose (no fee). Reservations for Furnace Creek are available six months in advance for the period of 10/15 to 1/31*, or for group sites 12 months in advance through www.recreation.gov. *Furnace Creek campground will be closed 2/1/12 for sewer and water line replacement, estimated closure 2 - 3 months. RV hook-ups are available at Furnace Creek Ranch, Stovepipe Wells Village and Panamint Springs Resort. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/deva.

Campsites are available in **SEQUOIA/KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS** on a first-come/first-served basis. For recorded information to plan a visit to the park, call 1-559-565-3341 or visit the web at www.nps.gov/seki.

Cooperating Agencies of the Eastern Sierra InterAgency Visitor Center

Inyo County
California - Department of Fish & Game
City of Los Angeles - Department of Water & Power

California - Department of Transportation
National Park Service

Bureau of Land Management
Mono County
USDA - Forest Service

FISHING: General trout season is closed in the Eastern Sierra. However, the **OWENS RIVER** south of Crowley Lake (including Pleasant Valley Reservoir and Tinnemaha Reservoir) and **DIAZ LAKE** are open to year-round fishing. California fishing regulations are available at sporting good stores selling fishing licenses, or on the web at www.dfg.ca.gov.

HUNTING: General hunting season for quail, chukar, pheasant and doves is open. Waterfowl season for ducks (including Mergansers), common Moorhen, American Coot and geese is open. For information, check the web at www.dfg.ca.gov. For deer hunting, the Goodale Buck Hunt (Inyo County/Sierra Escarpment) and the Round Valley Apprentice Buck Hunt (Mono-Inyo County, west of HWY 395) are open through 12/18.

WINTER SPORTS: **MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN** is open with an 18" - 24" base of machine groomed snow. Please be aware, some early season obstacles do exist, the available terrain and number of lifts is increasing as snow allows. Ski and ride with care. For daily lift operations and snow conditions, visit the web site at www.mammothmountain.com or call 1-888-766-9778.

Visit the **MAMMOTH LAKES WELCOME CENTER** (on SR 203) for more information on roads, fees/passes, permits, current recreation updates, current snow conditions, trail maps and visitor guides; open daily 8:00am to 5:00pm.

BACKCOUNTRY: Backpackers should be prepared with winter gear for snowy/icy terrain, freezing temperatures and sudden weather changes. Recent snow makes trails difficult to locate and passes very slick. Most roads to trailheads are closed for the winter. **WILDERNESS PERMITS** are required for overnight travel all year long. Trailhead quotas, which daily limit the number of hikers on trails, are no longer in effect for Eastern Sierra wilderness areas. Self-issue permits can be obtained in the night boxes at the following locations: InterAgency Visitor Center (Lone Pine), Bishop Ranger Station, Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center, Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center (Lee Vining) and Bridgeport Ranger Station after office hours. For information on Inyo National Forest wilderness permits, please visit the web at www.fs.usda.gov/inyo.

FOR THE HOLIDAYS: Join in the 112th **Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count**, the oldest and largest citizen science event in the world; beginning 12/14/11 through 1/5/12. For over a hundred years, people have gathered during the winter holiday season to count birds. All skill levels are encouraged to participate. Contact the following individuals for counts in the region:

Ash Meadow National Wildlife Refuge - Friday, 12/16 - contact Sam Skalak at samuel_skalak@fws.gov

Bishop - Saturday, 12/17 - contact Chris Howard at chris93514@gmail.com

Butterbredt Spring/Jawbone ACEC (off SR 14/NW of BLM Jawbone Station) - Saturday, 12/17 - contact Charles Bragg at braggjr67@verizon.net Note: Roads can be rough, high clearance recommended.

Death Valley National Park - Saturday, 12/17 - contact Linda Manning at linda_manning@nps.gov

Lancaster - Saturday, 12/17 - contact Nick & Mary Freeman at mnfreeman@earthlink.net

Ridgecrest/China Lake - Sunday, 12/18 - contact Pete Woodman at kivabio@aol.com

Shoshone/China Ranch/Tecopa - Sunday, 12/18 - contact Len Warren at birdman88.com@gmail.com

Sequoia National Park - Sunday, 12/18 - contact Savannah Boiano at savannah_boiano@sequoiahistory.org

Yosemite National Park - Sunday, 12/18 - contact Sarah Stock at sarah_stock@nps.gov

Tehachapi - Tuesday, 12/20 - contact Larry Parmeter at lanparmeter3@hotmail.com

ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

Visit the Mono Lake Committee & Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce Information Center, located in the center of town, open daily 9:00am to 5:00pm, for information on the **MONO BASIN NATIONAL FOREST SCENIC AREA/MONO LAKE TUFA STATE RESERVE**.

EASTERN CALIFORNIA MUSEUM in Independence is open from 10:00am to 5:00pm daily, with exhibits on Inyo County, including a significant collection of Native American baskets and artifacts from Manzanar NHS.

The Interpretive Center at **MANZANAR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**, located 5 miles south of Independence, is open daily from 9:00am to 4:30pm. Self-guided walking and auto tours make it easy to explore the park. Check at the Interpretive Center, or the web at www.nps.gov/manz, for more information.

BLM JAWBONE STATION REGIONAL OHV FACILITY is open 9:00am to 5:00pm daily for trip assistance. The station is located 25 miles north of Mojave on SR 14 for pre-trip information; call 1-760-373-1146.

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER (temporary) at the Furnace Creek Ranch is open daily from 8:00am to 5:00pm. Ranger talks and other interpretive programs are presented daily. An evening program is presented at 7:00pm in a variety of locations. Check at the Visitor Center, or www.nps.gov/deva for information. **SCOTTY'S CASTLE** has "Living History" tours from 9:00am to 5:00pm, and "Underground Mystery Tours" daily. Reservations for Scotty's Castle tours are available on the web at recreation.gov or call 1-877-444-6777.

Reports on current recreation conditions, schedules of planned events and detailed information on visitor destinations throughout the Eastern Sierra Nevada and Northern Mojave Desert are available daily at the Visitor Center. 12/14/11kcw