

City of Rocks/Castle Rocks Info Guide

General Information

Welcome to southern Idaho—home of City of Rocks National Reserve and Castle Rocks State Park. The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) manages "The City" and "Castles," both of which are home to world-class rock climbing, hiking, picnicking, mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, photography. This brochure provides you with information on where to park, camp hike and climb in both parks. For more information, call the Park at 208-824-5519.

City of Rocks National Reserve

The City of Rocks National Reserve, designated on November 18, 1988, is located in Cassia County, Idaho. Unique granite formations, some towering as high as 600 feet, provide outstanding rock climbing. The City includes some of the oldest rock west of the Mississippi River. In addition, remnants of the California and Salt Lake Alameda Trails are visible and protected within the Reserve's boundaries. An abundance of wildflowers, many species of birds, and other wildlife offer numerous opportunities for viewing and photographing. The City's historical and geological features, grand vistas

and opportunities for recreation make the Reserve a must-visit during any trip to southern Idaho.

Castle Rocks State Park

Castle Rocks is a dramatic geologic area located near the City of Rocks in the Southern Albion Mountain Range. Castles consists primarily of Quartz-monzonite, a type of granite associated with the Almo Pluton region. Castles is characterized by pinnacles and monoliths—many over 400 feet tall. Similar in appearance to the City of Rocks, Castles has attracted climbers for years but until recently was privately owned and off limits to climbing.

Castle Rocks Ranch was placed on the market in 1999 when concerns that the pristine and historic treasure might be commercially developed put into motion a several-year process to establish Castle Rocks Ranch as an Idaho state park. The Castle Rocks Ranch Acquisition Act of 2000 authorized the NPS to purchase the 1,240-acre ranch with funding provided by the Access Fund and The Conservation Fund. In 2003, The NPS subsequently transferred the property to IDPR who then opened Castles as a state park with the intention of providing facilities for recreation.



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City of Rocks National Reserve Rules and Information

Operating Hours & Seasons:

The City is open year-round. During the high season (Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day), the Visitor Center is open 7 days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The hours during the months of September, October, April and May are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. — Monday through Friday.

Fees and Rules:

There is no entrance fee or charge for day use at the City.

Camping:

There are about 75 designated campsites in the Reserve, with three available group sites. Reservations are not mandatory, but are a smart idea during most of the climbing season. Call 208-824-5519 to make reservations. Many of the campsites among the rock formations are accessed from the road, with a few requiring a short walk. Sites are equipped with picnic tables and fire rings. There are no hook-ups, showers or dump stations. Vault toilets are located throughout the City. There is one potable water source in the Reserve located above The Bread Loaves on the road towards Oakley. Gathering firewood is prohibited; either bring your own or purchase it in nearby Almo.

The camping fee for one vehicle and one site is \$7 per night. Each additional vehicle is charged \$5 per night. A maximum of two vehicles, 8 people, and two tents are allowed at a single site. There is a \$25 reservation fee and \$2 per person, per night camping fee for group sites. At least 17 people are required to reserve a group site. Maximum group size varies depending on the site. Contact the Reserve for more information. Backcountry permits are free and available at the visitor center. The leash law is in effect—ALL DOGS MUST BE LEASHED AT ALL TIMES!

Climbing:

There is an abundance of climbing at The City. Climbing is prohibited on all rocks (including the Twin Sisters) within the 1/2-mile wide California Trail corridor to preserve the historic view shed and inscriptions. Additional rocks within this prohibited area include: Bulldog Wall, City Limits, Monkey Head, Treasure Rock, Chicken Rock, Camp Rock, Kaiser's Helmet, and the Dome.

Other prohibitions include gluing or chipping, the removal of existing fixed anchors and the use of all drills and bolting equipment without permission from the City of Rocks Manager or appropriate landowner. Climbers that wish to establish new routes with fixed anchors should contact Reserve officials to obtain an application requesting permission to bolt.

Reserve managers urge climbers to adhere to a minimum impact climbing philosophy by minimizing the use of chalk and using neutral colored equipment. Do not bother wildlife and respect any posted seasonal closures. Protect vegetation and prevent erosion by using established trails, roads and campsites. Pack out all your garbage. Use available fire rings and your own firewood. Use existing restrooms.

Private Property:

All Reserve visitors should respect adjacent private property and any cattle that may be present. Although tempting, access to rocks on private property is prohibited unless authorized by the landowner. These rocks include: The Dolphin, Yellow Wall, Eagle Rock, Checkered Demon, Electric Avenue, Stinner's Rock, Mississippi Fred's, Bobcat Rock, and The Flintstone.



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The Access Fund

The Access Fund is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to leaving climbing areas open and to conserving the climbing environment. With over 15,000 members and affiliates from across the country, the Access Fund advocates on behalf of approximately one million technical rock climbers and mountaineers in the United States. The Access Fund works cooperatively with public land managers on conservation projects and management planning, provides funding for conservation projects and scientific studies, develops and distributes educational materials, acquires/manages land, and represents the interests of climbers on public policy issues. Need help with a climbing closure? Land acquisition? Legal or land management issues? Funding for trails and other projects? Starting a local climbers' group? CALL US at (303) 545-6772.



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How To Care For The City of Rocks and Castle Rocks State Park:

Climbing Considerations:

Avoid climbing when the rock is wet, such as immediately after a rainstorm. Small features or footholds break more easily when the rock is wet. Unload gear and take breaks on large rocks or other durable ground to avoid damaging vegetation. If you are in a group and using top ropes be considerate of other people wanting to access the occupied climbs.

Cliff-Nesting Raptors - Be aware that there may be nesting raptors in the area, with seasonally posted restrictions. If you inadvertently come across a raptor nest on a climb, back off immediately. If in doubt, avoid these climbs. Federal law requires land managers to protect these birds. Call park headquarters at 208-824-5519 to report unusual bird sightings or nest sites.

Cultural Resources - Both the City of Rocks and Castle Rocks State Park are rich in historical and cultural resources. Do not climb on routes that have any sign of rock art, historical writings or ruins at their base. Again, if in doubt avoid these climbs. Federal law requires land managers to protect these cultural sites by managing them so that they are not impaired in any way.

Dogs - Pets cause impacts. Particularly around the base of climbs, prevent your pet from digging and chewing vegetation, and chasing wildlife or running off trail. Pack a plastic bag for dog waste or bury the waste in a 6"-8" hole. Be considerate of other users—control barking and keep your dog on a leash.

Trails - Use only existing access trails. A few footsteps off the trail may damage fragile plants and soils, accelerate erosion and spread noxious weeds. If you are hiking in areas without trails, follow existing drainages and stable ground. Check out the map on the reverse side of this brochure for trail locations.

Group Size - The smaller the group size, the fewer impacts on the environment and other users. Be considerate of other visitors by keeping noise to a minimum and camping some distance away. Many people appreciate the quiet and privacy.

Camping Practices:

Campfires-If you must have a fire only use pre-existing pits, bring your own wood, and keep the fire small. Take the wood away if you do not use it. Although downed trees and shrubs may seem like good firewood, the resource is limited and of high value for future plant and soil development. Please leave what you find and never break off limbs from live trees for firewood.

Toilets - Toilet facilities are located throughout the City of Rocks and will be developed for Castles. Where no toilet is available select a site at least 200 feet from any trail, water source, camping, or climbing area. Avoid traveling over or using areas with fragile soil. Dig a hole 6"-8" deep, deposit the waste, and leave the area as you found it. Pack out toilet paper.

Trash - Pack out everything including cigarette butts and food waste. Food scraps attract insects, rodents and other animals. Develop the habit of removing trash left by others, especially small items such as finger or gear-marking tape. Consider bringing a garbage bag in your pack for this purpose.

Vehicles and Parking - Stay on the existing roads and avoid creating new ones. If you need to turn around, look for a disturbed site or do a 4-point turn within the confines of the roadway. Only park in established sites. Consider car-pooling to the crags.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces - Durable surfaces include: established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, or dry grasses. Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from streams. Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is unnecessary and unacceptable.

Leave What You Find - Preserve the past, examine, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them. Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species. Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.



ACCESS: It's every climber's concern. Climbers can help preserve access by leaving the environment in its natural state. Here are some simple guidelines:

- ASPIRE TO CLIMB WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE
- DISPOSE OF HUMAN WASTE PROPERLY
- USE EXISTING TRAILS
- BE DISCRETE WITH FIXED ANCHORS
- RESPECT THE RULES
- PARK AND CAMP IN DESIGNATED AREAS
- BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER USERS
- RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY

This brochure was made possible through contributions by the following:



CONTACTS:

The Access Fund: 303-545-6772
Black Diamond Equipment: 801-278-5552
Marmot: 707-544-4590
The Elephant's Perch: 208-726-3497
City of Rocks/Castle Rocks Visitor Center: 208-824-5519

Castle Rocks State Park Rules and Information

Operating Hours & Seasons:

During high season (Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day), the Park is open between the hours of 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day. During the off-season (September, October, April, and May), the Park is open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday-Sunday.

Fees and Rules:

All recreation users must pay a motor vehicle entrance fee or exhibit an annual or VIP pass. The Park has established a carrying capacity of people and vehicles that may increase as facilities are developed. When parking facilities are maximized, no vehicles will be allowed into the Park until space becomes available. Call the Park for current limits and availability. Users entering on bike, horse or foot may enter without charge. All users must stop at the Park's Contact Center (formerly the ranch house) for a required short educational program on Park policies, resources, and an orientation to recreational facilities.

A leash no greater than 6 feet is required for all pets. Dogs frequently contribute to resource degradation by digging, chewing vegetation, and chasing wildlife. Users should respect the natural quiet of the area and strive to Leave No Trace.

Camping:

Castle Rocks State Park is a day-use facility with no campsites. Camping can be found nearby at the City of Rocks National Reserve.

The Park:

Although managed by City of Rocks National Reserve staff from its Almo headquarters site, Castles is operated as an independent unit of the Idaho state park system. Castle Rocks State Park is classified as a "natural park" with both active and passive recreation uses in a unique natural geologic setting. Natural parks are established to maintain the ecological integrity of Idaho areas possessing historic resource values. Natural parks provide resources in a manner that will enhance the understanding, appreciation and stewardship for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Visitors to Castles should be aware of the following:

Cultural resources here are pristine, numerous and federally protected. Federally protected species and state species of concern exist within Castle Rocks and are identified at the Contact Center. Soils are highly susceptible to erosion, and hiking off established trails is detrimental to the area. Grazing is a traditional and continuing use at Castles, and respect for this established use can build positive relations with adjacent private landowners.

Climbing:

Climbing is open throughout Castles where closure notices are not posted. Closed areas can be identified through required orientation. New route developers are required to provide documentation to the Park. Climbing routes using all natural/removable protection are permitted everywhere. New route development using fixed anchors is allowed at Castle Rocks in areas opened incrementally by zones. Zone 1 is the area known as Castle Rock (AKA Lone Rock), and is currently open to new fixed anchor development. Zone 1 is the area known as Castle Rocks, because natural and cultural resources have determined that climbing is appropriate. The remaining zones will be opened for future fixed anchor development following additional natural and cultural resource analysis. Check with IDPR officials to find out what areas are currently open for new route development using fixed anchors. Please note that fixed anchors are permitted only after the new route developer has registered and attended a short education and orientation program at the contact center.



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