Snow Canyon State Park is a 7,400-acre scenic park tucked amid lava flows and soaring sandstone cliffs in a strikingly colorful and fragile desert environment. Visitors marvel at majestic views and the subtle interplay of light, shadow, and color dancing across canyon walls.

Located in the 62,000-acre Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, established to protect the federally-listed desert tortoise and its habitat, the park offers opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts of all ages. Activities include hiking, nature studies, wildlife viewing, photography, camping, ranger talks and junior ranger programs. There are more than 38 miles of hiking trails, a three-mile paved walking/biking trail, technical climbing and more than 15 miles of equestrian trails.

Park History

Created in 1959, Snow Canyon has a long history of human use. Anasazi Indians inhabited the region from A.D. 200 to 1250, utilizing the canyon for hunting and gathering. Paiute Indians used the canyon from A.D. 1200 to the mid-1800s. Mormon pioneers discovered Snow Canyon in the 1850s while searching for lost cattle. The canyon was the site of Hollywood films such as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, The Electric Horseman, and Jeremiah Johnson. Originally called Dixie State Park, it was later renamed for Lorenzo and Erastus Snow, prominent pioneering Utah leaders.

Geology

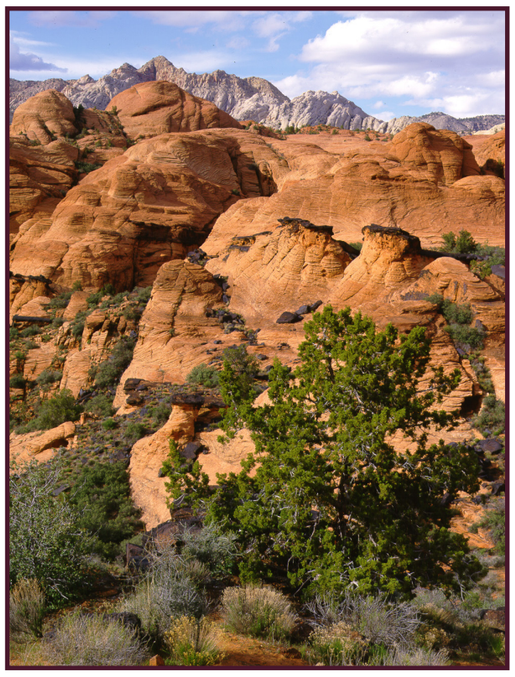
Transported by wind more than 183 million years ago, tiny grains of quartzite sand covered much of what is now Utah. These sand dunes, up to 2,500 feet thick, eventually cemented into stone. Burnt orange to creamy white in color, Navajo sandstone, the predominant rock in the park, is what remains of the ancient desert sand sea. Over time, water cut and shaped the sandstone to form canyons. Approximately 1.4 million years ago, and as recently as 27,000 years ago, nearby cinder cones erupted causing lava to flow down these canyons, filling them with basalt. This redirected ancient waterways, eventually carving new canyons. Look up to see lava-capped ridges that were once canyon bottoms.

Plants and Animals

Snow Canyon is home to a diversity of plant and wildlife species not found elsewhere in the state. Located at the intersection of the Mojave Desert, Great Basin Desert and Colorado Plateau, the park averages 7.5 inches of rainfall each year. Vegetation includes desert adapted species such as creosote bush, narrow leaf yucca, sand sage, blackbrush, scrub oak and desert willow. If spring and fall conditions are right, wildflowers light up the park with a showy display of blooms. Wildlife watchers may see coyotes, kit foxes, quail, roadrunners, leopard lizards, gopher snakes and canyon tree frogs. Twenty-two sensitive species protected by state and/or federal law are found within the park. They include peregrine falcons, desert tortoises and gila monsters. Plant and wildlife checklists are available at park headquarters for a nominal fee. Removal of plants and wildlife is prohibited.

Planning Your Visit

Park facilities include picnic areas, modern restrooms, and a 33-unit campground with water and electric hook ups, tent and group campsites, showers, drinking water and sewage disposal station.



For Your Safety

- Carry at least one liter of water per person.
- Do not hike alone. Take a friend or family member along or tell someone of your plans.
- Avoid hiking when temperatures are extreme. Otherwise keep your hike short, wear a hat and sunscreen, and bring water.
- Scrambling and rock climbing are dangerous and permitted in designated areas only. Each year inexperienced visitors are seriously injured or killed while climbing on rocks.Only attempt with proper equipment and training.

Park Guidelines

Please observe these park regulations to ensure everyone's visit is pleasant:

Camping – Camp only in designated areas. Each permit covers one vehicle and any attached recreational equipment. There is an extra fee for additional vehicles or camping equipment. Only one extra vehicle and up to eight people are allowed in a campsite.

Hiking – Hiking and scrambling are permitted only on designated trails and slickrock. See a park ranger for more information.

Fires – Campfires may be built in designated areas. Gathering firewood or starter is prohibited. Seasonal fire bans are in effect June 1 through September 15.

Pets – Permitted only in campground, on West Canyon Road and Whiptail Trail; must be leashed. For safety and courtesy, please keep your pets under control.

Plants and Animals – All plants, animals, minerals, and other natural features in state parks are protected. It is unlawful to remove, alter, or destroy them.

Wastewater – It is unlawful to dump or drain wastewater from campers or trailers onto the ground. A sanitary disposal station is provided for registered campers.

Quiet Hours – 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.

Accidents – Please report accidents or suspicious activities to a ranger.

Permits – A Special Use Permit is required for all special events and commercial or professional filming and photography.

Your park fees provide for the care, protection and enhancement of this park.

Park Location:
The park is located eight miles north of St. George on State Route 18.

Operating Hours:
The park is open 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. year-round.
No holiday closures.

Address Inquiries To:
Snow Canyon State Park
1002 Snow Canyon Dr.
Ivins, UT 84738
(435) 628–2255
snowcanyon@utah.gov
or
Utah State Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 146001
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6001
(801) 538-7220
stateparks.utah.gov

For Reservations Call:
(801) 322-3770 or toll-free (800) 322-3770

Utah State Parks Mission:
To enhance the quality of life by preserving and providing natural, cultural and recreational resources for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations.

Scan the QR code below with your mobile device to visit the park website, stateparks.utah.gov/parks/snow-canyon

Information contained in this brochure was accurate at the time of printing. Policies, facilities, fees, hours and regulations, etc., change as mandated. For updated information please contact the park.

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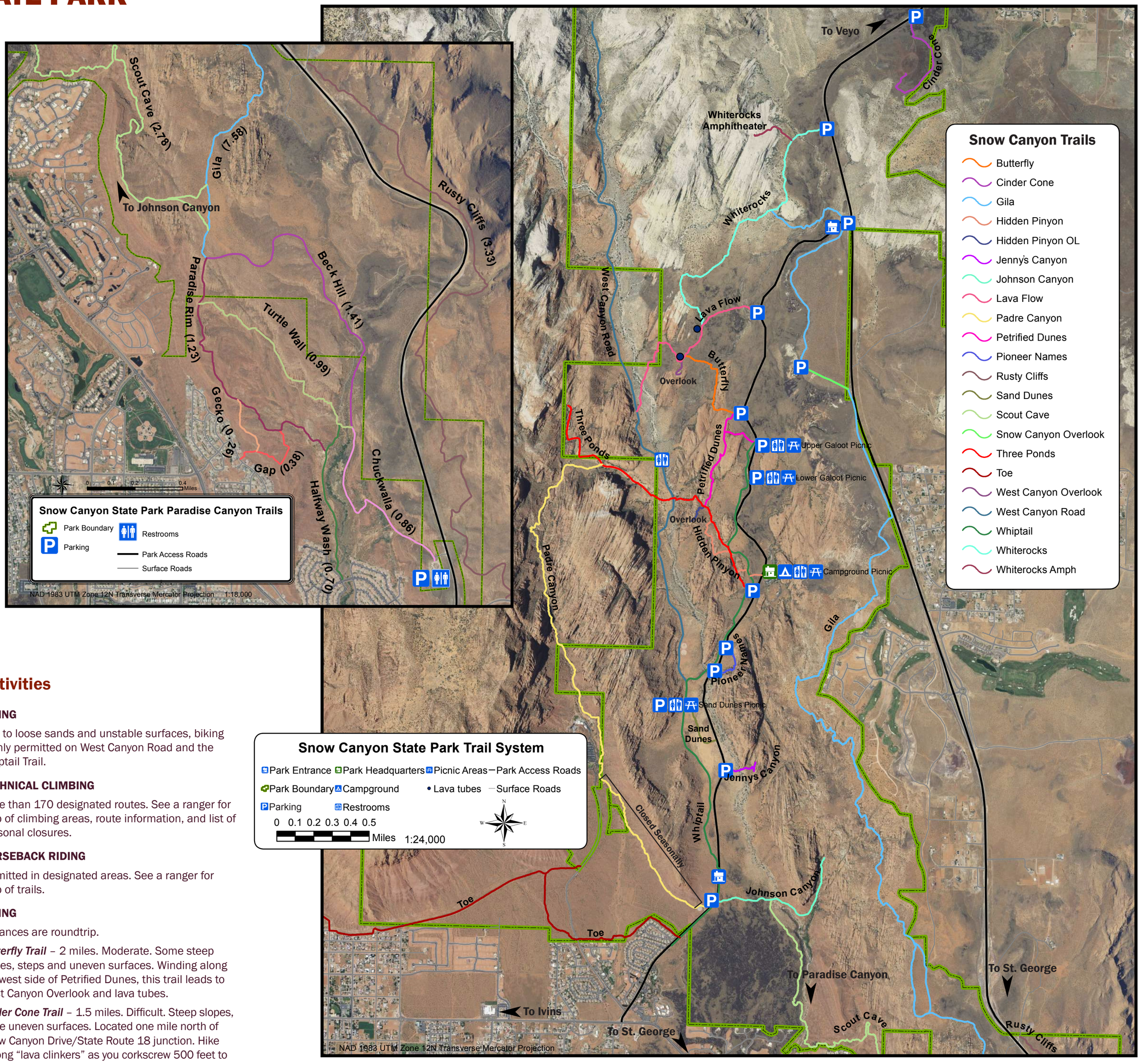
Snow Canyon State Park

STATE PARK
SNOW CANYON



Activities

BIKING

Due to loose sands and unstable surfaces, biking is only permitted on West Canyon Road and the Whiptail Trail.

TECHNICAL CLIMBING

More than 170 designated routes. See a ranger for map of climbing areas, route information, and list of seasonal closures.

HORSEBACK RIDING

Permitted in designated areas. See a ranger for map of trails.

HIKING

Distances are roundtrip.

Butterfly Trail – 2 miles. Moderate. Some steep slopes, steps and uneven surfaces. Winding along the west side of Petrified Dunes, this trail leads to West Canyon Overlook and lava tubes.

Cinder Cone Trail – 1.5 miles. Difficult. Steep slopes, loose uneven surfaces. Located one mile north of Snow Canyon Drive/State Route 18 junction. Hike among "lava clinkers" as you corkscrew 500 feet to the top of an extinct volcano where you can view a volcano crater and panoramic scenery.

Hidden Pinyon – 1.5 miles. Moderate. Rocky slopes and deep sand. Drop-offs. This self-guided nature trail highlights geological features and native plants of the park.

Jenny's Canyon – One-half mile. Easy. Level with few slopes and steps. This great children's trail leads to a short, sculpted slot canyon.

Closed annually from March 15 to June 1

Johnson Canyon – 2 miles. Easy. Level with some rocky slopes and steps. Leads to a sheltered canyon of willow and cottonwood, winding through lava flows and red rock to an arch spanning 200 feet.

Closed annually from March 15 to October 31

Lava Flow Trail – Moderate. Uneven surfaces. Hike through a jumbled lava field, the vivid remains of a long-ago volcanic eruption.

Petrified Dunes Trail – 1 mile. Moderate. Some steep slopes, uneven surfaces. This trail crosses massive Navajo sandstone outcrops and sand dunes frozen in time.

Pioneer Names – One-half mile. Easy. Fairly level with some steps and slopes. This crescent-shaped trail passes pioneer names, written in axle grease, dating back to 1881.

Sand Dunes – One-half mile. Easy. Deep sand with some slopes. Trail leads to a large expanse of red sand serving as a giant sandbox and play area for children of all ages.

Three Ponds – 3.5 miles. Moderate. Some rocky slopes, and deep sand. Trail winds through sandy wash to mouth of a 400-foot canyon. Potholes eroded in sandstone catch seasonal rain, giving the trail its name.

West Canyon Road – 8 miles. Easy. Gravel and sand surface. Fairly level. Trail follows a maintenance road winding past dry washes and towering cliffs to the head of present-day Snow Canyon.

Whiptail Trail – 6 miles. Easy. Level with some slopes. Accessible to people with disabilities. Tucked along the canyon bottom, this paved trail is suitable for walking, jogging, and biking.

Whiterocks Trail/Whiterocks Amphitheater - 4 miles. Moderate. Some rocky slopes, uneven surfaces. Trail leads to a natural sandstone amphitheater, passing through the red, white and black geologic colors of the park. Or reach the amphitheater on a one-mile trail located one-half mile north of the Snow Canyon Drive/ State Route 18 junction.

For information on additional trails leading into Paradise Canyon and other park areas, please see a park ranger.

Know Before You Go

- Hike on designated trails only.
- Park in designated areas only.
- Dogs permitted on West Canyon Road and Whiptail Trail only. Dogs must be leashed at all times.
- Some park areas are closed seasonally. Please obey all posted closures.
- Pack It In – Pack More Of It Out.