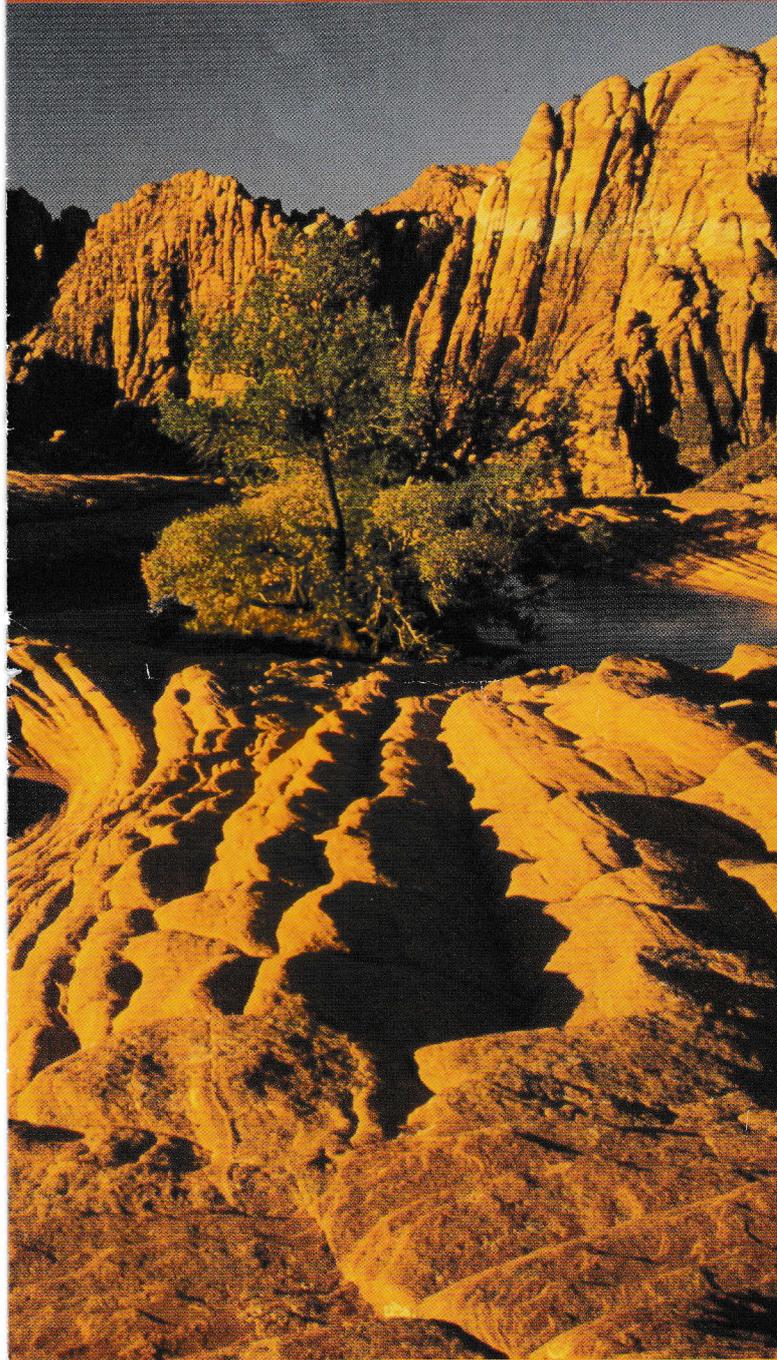


Utah State Parks

# SNOW CANYON



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.

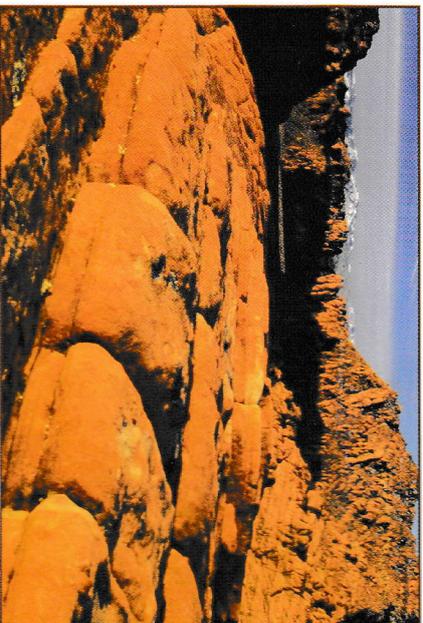
Located in the 62,000-acre Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, established to protect the federally listed desert tortoise and its habitat, the park offers opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts of all ages. Activities include hiking, nature studies, wildlife viewing, photography, camping, ranger talks and junior ranger programs. There are more than 18 miles of hiking trails, a three-mile paved walking/biking trail, technical climbing and over five 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 has been 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.

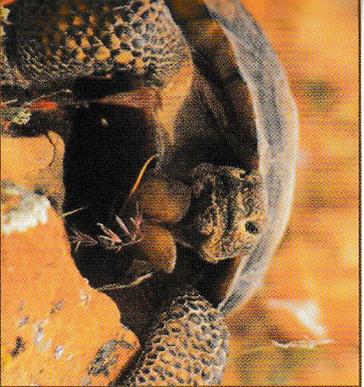
## Geology

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 2.5 million years ago, and as recently as 10,000 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

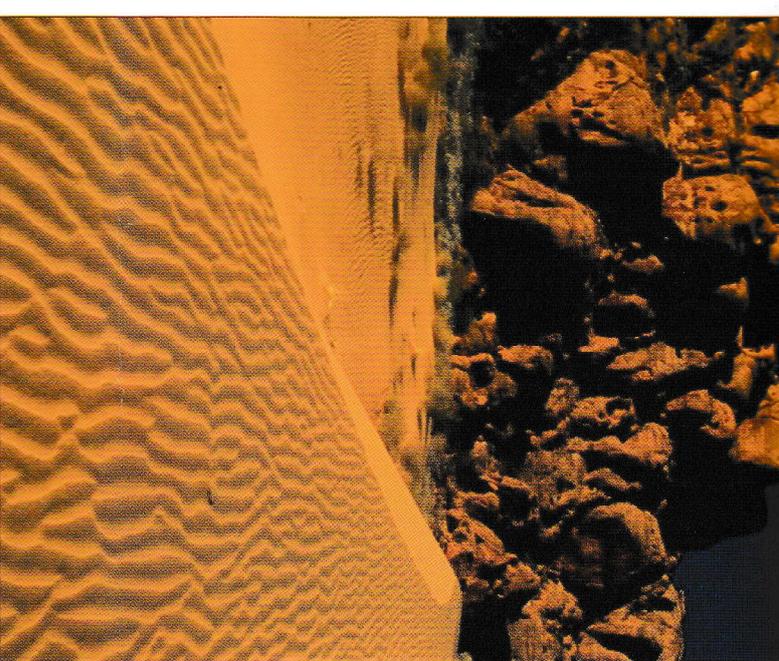
Snow Canyon is home to a diversity of plant and wildlife species not found elsewhere in the state. Located at the intersection of the Mojave Desert, Great Basin Desert and Colorado Plateau, the park averages 7.5 inches of rainfall each year. Vegetation includes desert adapted species such as creosote 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

## SNOW CANYON STATE PARK



## Activities

### BIKING

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

### TECHNICAL CLIMBING

Over 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 1 mile north of Snow Canyon Drive/State Route 18 junction. Hike among "lava clinkers" as you corkscrew 500 feet to the top of an

sewage disposal station.

### 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.
- ▶ Rolling of rocks is prohibited.
- ▶ Pack It In – Pack More Of It Out.

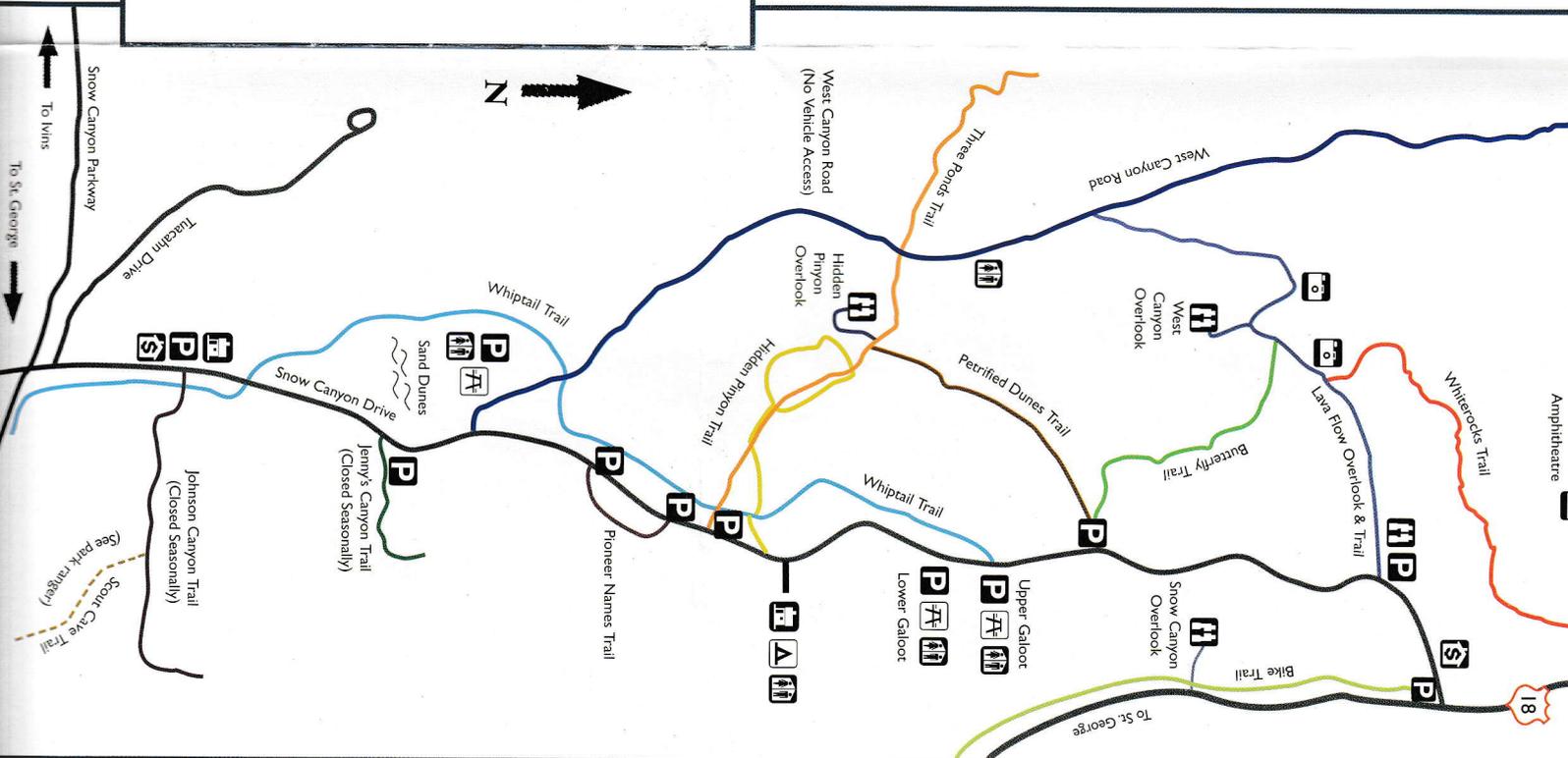
### Map Legend

- Picnic Area
- Campground
- Park Headquarters
- Points of Interest
- Scenic Overview
- Parking/Trailheads
- Entrance Station
- Restrooms
- Highways
- Paved Roads



### Trails

- Butterfly Trail
- Cinder Cone Trail
- Hidden Pinyon Trail
- Jenny's Canyon Trail
- Johnson Canyon Trail
- Lava Flow Overlook & Trail
- Petrified Dunes Trail
- Pioneer Names Trail
- Three Ponds Trail
- West Canyon Road
- Whiptail Trail
- Whiterocks Trail
- Scout Cave Trail



**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**

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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 physically challenged. Tucked along the canyon bottom, this paved trail is suitable for walking, jogging, and biking.

**White Rocks Trail/Lava Flow Overlook & Trail**  
4 miles. Moderate. Some rocky slopes, uneven surfaces. Passing through lava flows, sparse juniper stands and breathtaking views of West Canyon, trail leads to a natural amphitheater set in white sandstone. Or reach the amphitheater on a 1-mile trail located one-half mile north of the Snow Canyon Drive/State Route 18 junction.

**For information on additional trails leading from Snow Canyon into the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, please see a park ranger.**

