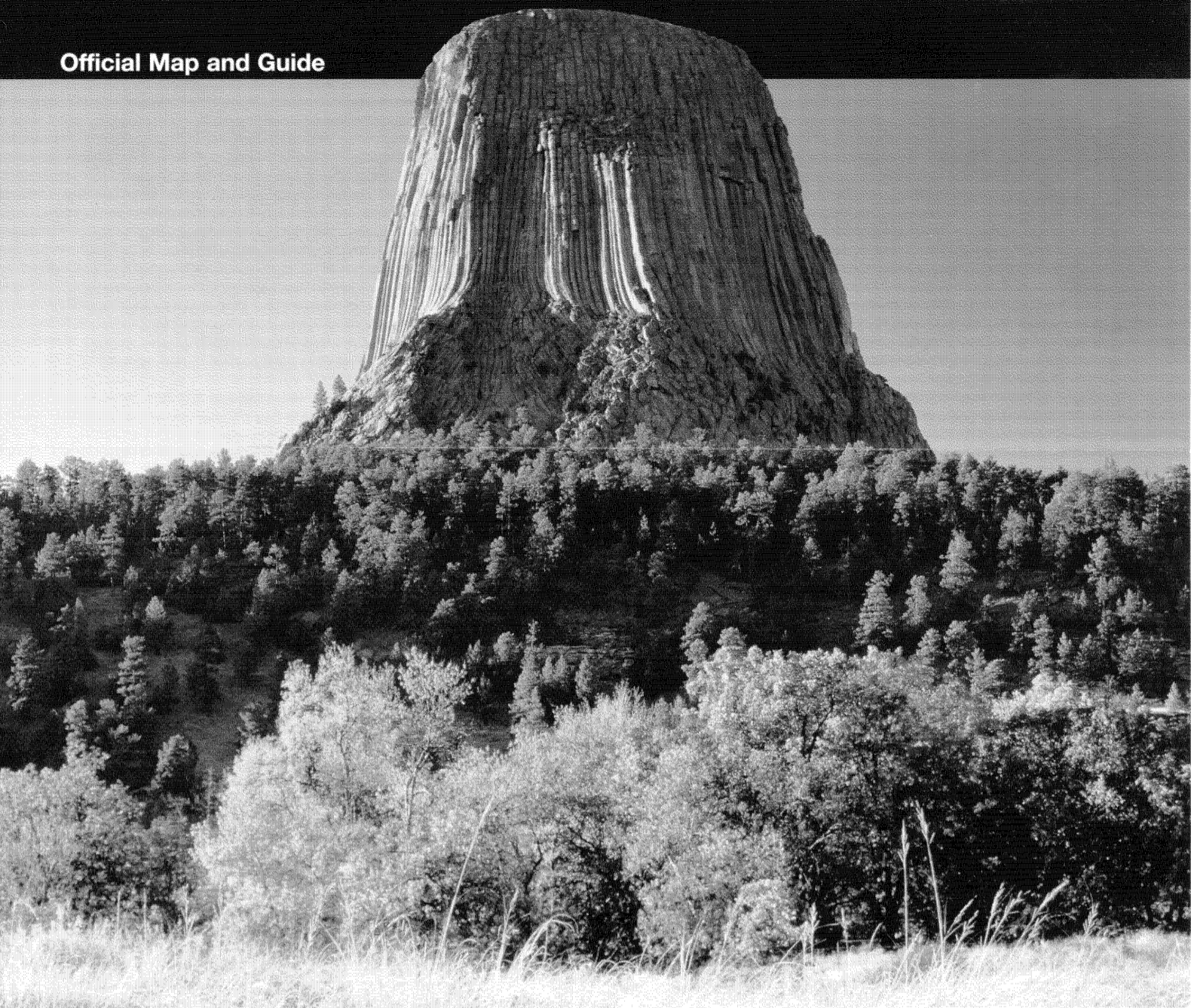


# Devils Tower

National Monument  
Wyoming

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

## Official Map and Guide



Larry Ulrich

## Rising Up Against the Sky

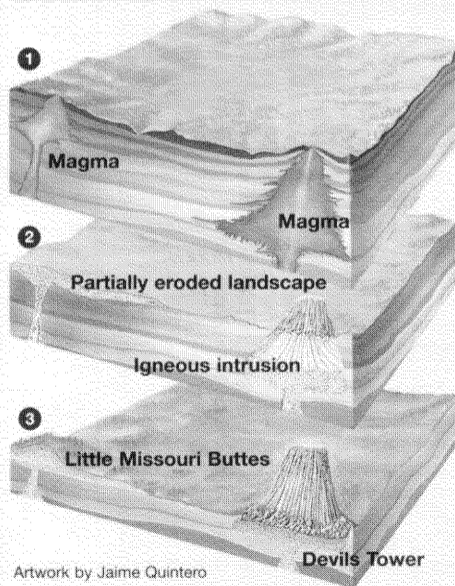
"A dark mist lay over the Black Hills, and the land was like iron," N. Scott Momaday wrote. "At the top of the ridge I caught sight of Devil's Tower upthrust against the gray sky as if in the birth of time the core of the earth had broken through its crust and the motion of the world was begun. There are things in nature that engender an awful quiet in the heart of man; Devil's Tower is one of them." Several Indian nations of the Great Plains share similar legends on the origin of this prominent butte. The Kiowa people say:

"Eight children were there at play, seven sisters and their brother. Suddenly the boy was struck dumb; he trembled and began to run upon his hands and feet. His fingers became claws, and his body was covered with fur. Directly there was a bear where the boy had been. The sisters were terrified; they ran, and the bear after them. They came to the stump of a great tree, and the tree spoke to them. It bade them climb upon it, and as they did so it began to rise into the air. The bear came to kill them, but they were just beyond its reach. It reared against the tree and scored the bark all around with its claws. The seven sisters were borne into the sky, and they became the stars of the Big Dipper."

"Bear Lodge" is one of many American Indian names for the Tower. Colonel Richard Dodge named it "Devils Tower" in 1875. He led the military expedition sent to confirm reports of gold being discovered in the Black Hills and to survey the area. Scientists then thought Devils Tower was the core of an ancient volcano. Recent data suggests it is instead an igneous intrusion—see diagram.

On July 4, 1893, with fanfare and more than 1,000 spectators, William Rogers and Willard Ripley made the first ascent, using a wooden ladder they had built that spring for the first 350 feet. The fact that they already had a flag-

## The Geological Story



Artwork by Jaime Quintero

**1.** About 60 million years ago molten magma was forced into sedimentary rocks above it and cooled underground. As it cooled it contracted and fractured into columns. An earlier flow formed Little Missouri Buttes. **2. and 3.** Over millions of years, erosion of the sedimentary rock exposed Devils Tower and accentuated Little Missouri Buttes. The Tower rises 867 feet from its base and stands 1,267 feet above the river and 5,112 feet above sea level. The area of its tear-drop shaped top is 1.5 acres. The diameter of its base is 1,000 feet.

pole waiting for raising Old Glory atop the Tower suggests the "first ascent" might have been one day before. The climbers' wives ran the refreshment stand and sold pieces of the flag as souvenirs. The Tower became a Fourth of July meeting place for families from area ranches, who might see each other but once a year. At the annual picnic in 1895, Mrs. Rogers used her husband's ladder to become the first woman to reach the summit.

Records of Tower climbs have been kept since 1937. Approximately 5,000 climbers come here every year from all over the world to climb on the massive columns. More than 220 routes have now been used in climbing the Tower.

But there is more to this area than the Tower. Life thrives around its base. Here in Wyoming's northeast corner, Black Hills pine forests merge with rolling plains grasslands. At Devils Tower you can see every phase in the process of establishing a forest—from bare rock to pines. And because mountains and plains converge here, you may find a great variety of birds. More than 150 species have been counted—including hawks, bald and golden eagles, prairie falcon, turkey vulture, and American kestrel. No one will miss the brightness of the male mountain bluebird, the industriousness of the nuthatches, or the feistiness of the black-billed magpie. Predominant mammals are the white-tailed deer and black-tailed prairie dog. You can spend hours watching busy, playful prairie dogs in their "town" on the grasslands below the Tower.

In 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed Devils Tower the first national monument under the new Antiquities Act. His action made Wyoming the home of both our first national park—Yellowstone in 1872—and our first national monument. Roosevelt acted to protect the Tower from commercial exploitation. Today a broad range of natural and cultural resources and values is also protected here as part of the National Park System.

During the Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps built road improvements, camping and picnicking facilities, and a museum. The roughhewn log museum still serves as a visitor center, book sales outlet, and the registration office for rock climbers.

# Devils Tower

**Access and Seasons** The monument is open year round. The entrance is 33 miles northeast of Moorcroft, Wyo., 27 miles northwest of Sundance, Wyo. via U.S. 14, and 52 miles southwest of Belle Fourche, S. Dak. via S. Dak. 34/Wyo. 24. Scheduled airlines serve Gillette, Wyo., and Rapid City, S. Dak., where cars may be rented. Summer days are warm, but in the evening and early morning you may want a sweater.

**Visitor Center** The visitor center is three miles from the park's entrance. Open seasonally, it offers exhibits about the Tower's history and geology. Activities are offered from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Parking is limited in summer. Alternative parking is available for oversized vehicles. The Devils Tower Natural History Association operates a bookstore. For publications information write to the Association at P.O. Box 37, Devils Tower, WY 82714-0037.

**Hiking Trails** The paved Tower Trail offers close-up Tower views, and wayside exhibits tell the Tower's story. Pets are not allowed on trails. Trail distances: Tower Trail 1.3 mi., Red Beds Trail 3 mi., South Side Trail 0.6 mi., Joyner Ridge Trail 1.5 mi., Valley View Trail 0.6 mi.

**Camping and Facilities** Open seasonally, the monument campground accommodates RVs and tents first-come, first-served. It has three group sites. Each campsite has a cooking grill, picnic table, and nearby potable water. Restrooms are accessible for persons with disabilities. There are no hookups, showers, or laundry facilities in the monument. A post office and full services are found within one mile of the campground and in nearby towns.

**Safety and Regulations** • Obey all posted signs. • **Do not feed or disturb prairie dogs.** They bite and may carry diseases. Abandoned prairie dog holes may be homes to black widow spiders and rattlesnakes. • Avoid rattlesnakes; they seldom bite humans unless the

snake is disturbed or mistreated. • Pets must be on a leash at all times. • All natural and cultural resources are protected by law. Disturbing animals and gathering items such as flowers and rocks are prohibited.

**Climbing the Tower** Climbers must register with a ranger before starting their climb and on their return. Be prepared for sudden storms; always carry rain gear and a flashlight. Rockfall is common; wear a climbing helmet. Ask a ranger for safety and climbing information. There is a voluntary climbing closure in June out of respect for American Indian beliefs.

**Information** Weather: call 605-341-7531. Radio: 1610 AM has traveler information. For more information contact: Devils Tower National Monument P.O. Box 10 Devils Tower, WY 82714-0010 307-467-5283 [www.nps.gov/deto](http://www.nps.gov/deto)

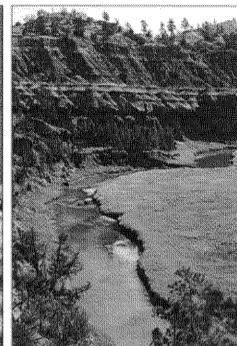
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Lichens and mosses can colonize bare rock. Next may come grasses and then the flowering plants and shrubs. Then trees sprout among the shrubs, and a new forest begins.



The black-tailed prairie dogs live in their "town" near the monument entrance. These communal animals are delightful to watch, especially the young pups at play.



The Belle Fourche River carved most of the landscape that exposed Devils Tower. It was named the "pretty fork river" in the 1700s by French fur trappers.



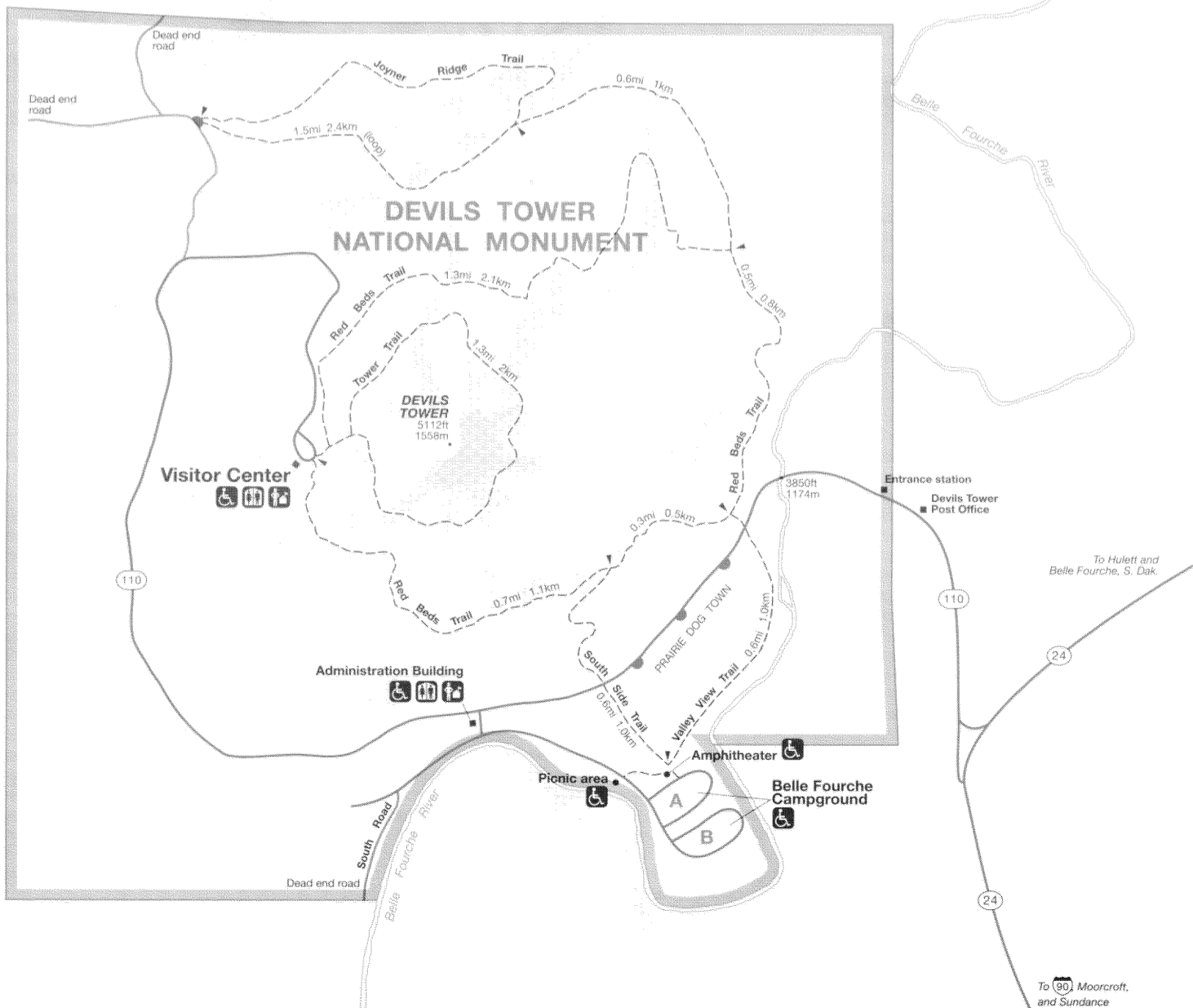
White-tailed deer live in wooded areas but may visit the campground at dawn or at dusk. Other mammals found in the park are cottontail rabbits, mule deer, chipmunks, and porcupines. Birdlife abounds. Com-

monly sighted are bluebirds, chickadees, jays, woodpeckers, robins, meadowlarks, vultures, and hawks.



- Hiking trail
- Unpaved road
- Parking area or turnout
- Distance indicator

- Ranger station
- Wheelchair accessible
- Restrooms



To Moorcroft, and Sundance