

# Cedar Breaks

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Monument  
Utah



Cedar Breaks Amphitheater

NPS

## The Amphitheater

Nothing is subtle about the great natural rock amphitheater of Cedar Breaks and its gigantic spectacle of extraordinary forms wrapped in bold, brilliant colors. "Cedar Breaks is without a doubt one of the most beautiful areas of Southern Utah," one observer said. "The vast expanse and colorful rock formations are truly unforgettable." The Cedar Breaks Amphitheater is a result of many of the same forces that created other great Southwestern landscapes, including the Grand Canyon, Zion Canyon, and the Bryce Amphitheater. It is, however, unique in its own right as an amazing product of geologic forces.

Shaped like a huge coliseum, the amphitheater is over 2,000 feet deep and over three miles in diameter. Millions of years of deposition, uplift, and erosion carved this huge bowl in the steep west-facing side of the 10,000-foot-high Markagunt Plateau. Stone spires stand like statues in

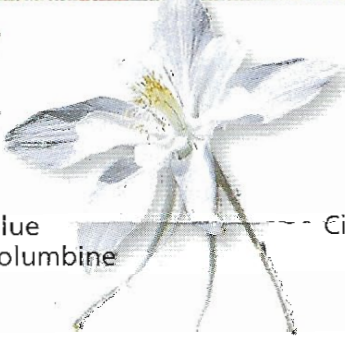
a gallery alongside columns, arches, and canyons. These intricate formations are the result of persistent erosion by rain, ice, and wind. Saturating the rock is a color scheme as striking as any on the Colorado Plateau. Varying combinations of iron and manganese give the rock its different reds, yellows, and purples.

Among the region's original residents are the Southern Paiute, who called Cedar Breaks *u-map-wich*, "the place where the rocks are sliding down all the time." Later settlers named it Cedar Breaks, misidentifying the area's juniper trees as cedars and using breaks to describe the steep, heavily eroded terrain. President Franklin D. Roosevelt established Cedar Breaks National Monument in 1933, calling nationwide attention to its spectacular amphitheater.

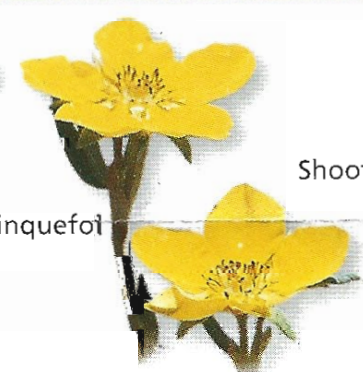
© MARGARET LITTLEJOHN



Indian paintbrush



Blue columbine



Cinquefoil



Shootingstar



Fleabane



Wild rose

FLOWERS NPS EXCEPT INDIAN PAINTBRUSH  
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## The Highcountry

Crowning the lofty Markagunt Plateau is the Cedar Breaks highcountry. It is a world as vibrant in color and as delicate in form as the rock amphitheater below, yet it is a very different place. Here you can immerse yourself in the lushness of the scenery, breathe in the fragrance of spruce-fir forests, and walk through subalpine meadows of grasses and seasonal wildflowers. In this sanctuary of clean, cool air, abundant rainfall, and full sunlight, nature exhibits its exceptional richness.

**Seasons of Color** In spring and summer, Cedar Breaks flaunts its natural flair for life most dramatically with a yearly show of wildflowers. Displays begin late in June, as bursts of mountain bluebell, lavender fleabane, cushion phlox, and other early bloomers appear. In mid-July displays begin to peak, and the meadows are overflowing with larkspur, lupine, columbine, scarlet paintbrush, and others. For the next few weeks Cedar Breaks is filled with an ever-changing parade of beauty. The colorful displays continue in the fall, as groves of quak-

ing aspens blanket the mountains in golden yellows, sunny oranges, and fiery reds.

**Ancient Trees of Life** While the wildflowers hurry through the short subalpine summer, the bristlecone pine takes its time. This Cedar Breaks native is the patriarch of trees. One gnarled and weather-beaten tree at Spectra Point has lived over 1,600 years. Bristlecone pines are found on harsh, wind-swept cliffs with thin soil, but it is precisely these environments that allow the trees to live so long. Competition from other trees is greatly reduced, and the poor conditions encourage centuries of slow, but steady growth.

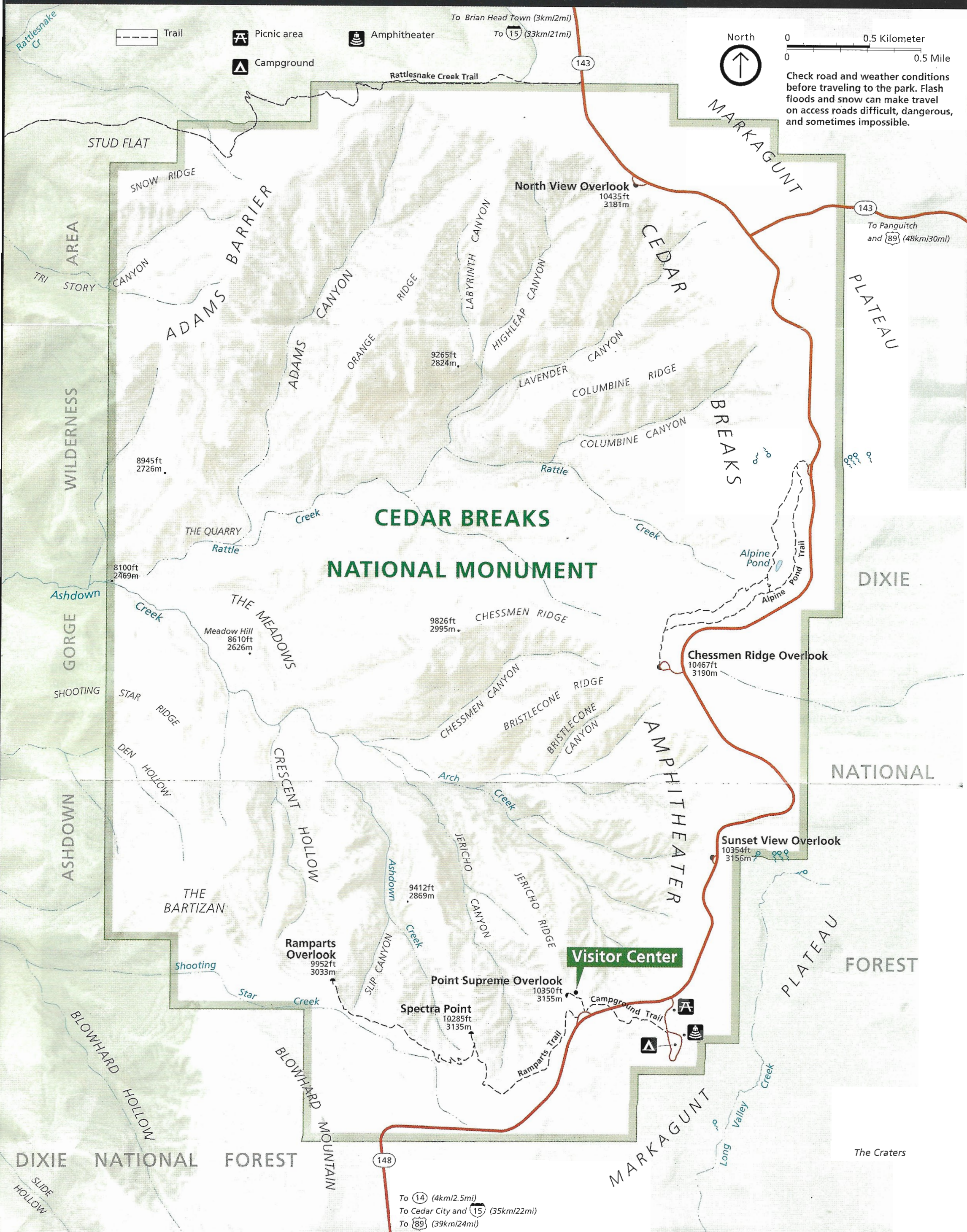
**Place of Refuge** Elsewhere in the highcountry are luxuriant forest retreats like Alpine Pond, a spring-fed pool that lies in a shady grove of Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, and quaking aspen. Also scattered throughout the park are lush meadows of grasses and wildflowers. Both forests and fields are alive with an abundant

diversity of wildlife. Watch for the many birds, including the friendly Clark's nutcrackers, noisy black ravens, and red-tailed hawks that soar above the plateau. You might see mule deer, pikas, marmots, porcupines, chipmunks, and red squirrels. More reclusive animals, like mountain lions and black bears, also live in this protected natural area.

**Wilderness Wonderland** Congress has recommended over 80 percent of Cedar Breaks for protection under the 1964 Wilderness Act. While awaiting Congressional action, the National Park Service manages the area to preserve wilderness values and character. Wilderness is meant to protect forever the land's natural conditions, opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and scientific, educational, and historical values. In wilderness people can sense being a part of the whole community of life on Earth. Preserving wilderness shows restraint and humility and benefits generations that will follow us. For information about the National Wilderness Preservation System visit [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net).



# Exploring Cedar Breaks



## Planning Your Visit

**Visitor Center** Start here for information, exhibits, and a bookstore. Open daily from late May to mid-October.

**Scenic Drive** A six-mile road through the high-country takes you to the park's attractions. Protect yourself and wildlife by obeying posted speed limits. Do not drive into meadows, which are easily damaged; use designated roadside parking areas only.

Four overlooks along the scenic drive allow you to view the massive Cedar Breaks amphitheater from different perspectives. Stay behind fences and away from the edge, where the rock is loose and crumbly. Don't throw rocks or other objects off the rim. Keep a close eye on children. Avoid exposed areas during thunderstorms.

**Hiking** The Ramparts Trail is a four-mile round-trip hike along the plateau rim. Steep climbs lead to spectacular views at Spectra Point and Ramparts Overlook with groves of ancient bristlecone pines at both locations. The Alpine Pond Trail follows a two-mile loop that leads to a forest glade and pond. A trail guide is available at

the trailhead or visitor center. The half-mile Campground Trail connects the campground and visitor center; it is the only pet-friendly trail in the park.

The more demanding Rattlesnake Creek Trail leads to the Ashdown Gorge Wilderness Area. Before attempting this hike, be aware of the hazards of steep terrain and flash floods. Contact Dixie National Forest at 435-865-3700; [www.fs.fed.us/dxnf](http://www.fs.fed.us/dxnf).

**Camping and Picnicking** The 25-site campground is open mid-June to mid-September. Ten sites can be reserved online up to six months in advance at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). The campground has water, restrooms, showers, and fire grills. Daytime temperatures are in the 60s and 70s°F; nighttime lows are in the 30s and 40s°F. The picnic area has water, tables, and grills. Fires are permitted only in campground and picnic area grills.

**Winter Activities** The park is open for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Snowmobiling is allowed by special regulation only on the marked, groomed trail. Roads, facilities, and services are closed from mid-October through May due to heavy snowfall.

**Safety and Regulations** Remember: your safety is your responsibility. • High altitudes may cause shortness of breath and tiredness—slow down, rest often, and drink plenty of water. • Wear a hat and use sunscreen and insect repellent. • Pets must be leashed and attended. They are not permitted on trails or in the visitor center. • Hunting is prohibited inside the park. For information on firearms and other regulations, check the park website. • Do not feed wildlife. • Federal laws protect all natural features; leave them undisturbed.

**Accessibility** We strive to make our facilities, programs, and services accessible to all. For information ask at the visitor center or visit our website.

**Emergencies: Call 911 first, then contact a park employee.**

Cedar Breaks National Monument  
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435-586-9451, ext. 0 (mid-October to late May)  
[www.nps.gov/cebr](http://www.nps.gov/cebr)

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