



**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

**Nevada**  
2024: Annual Manager's Report

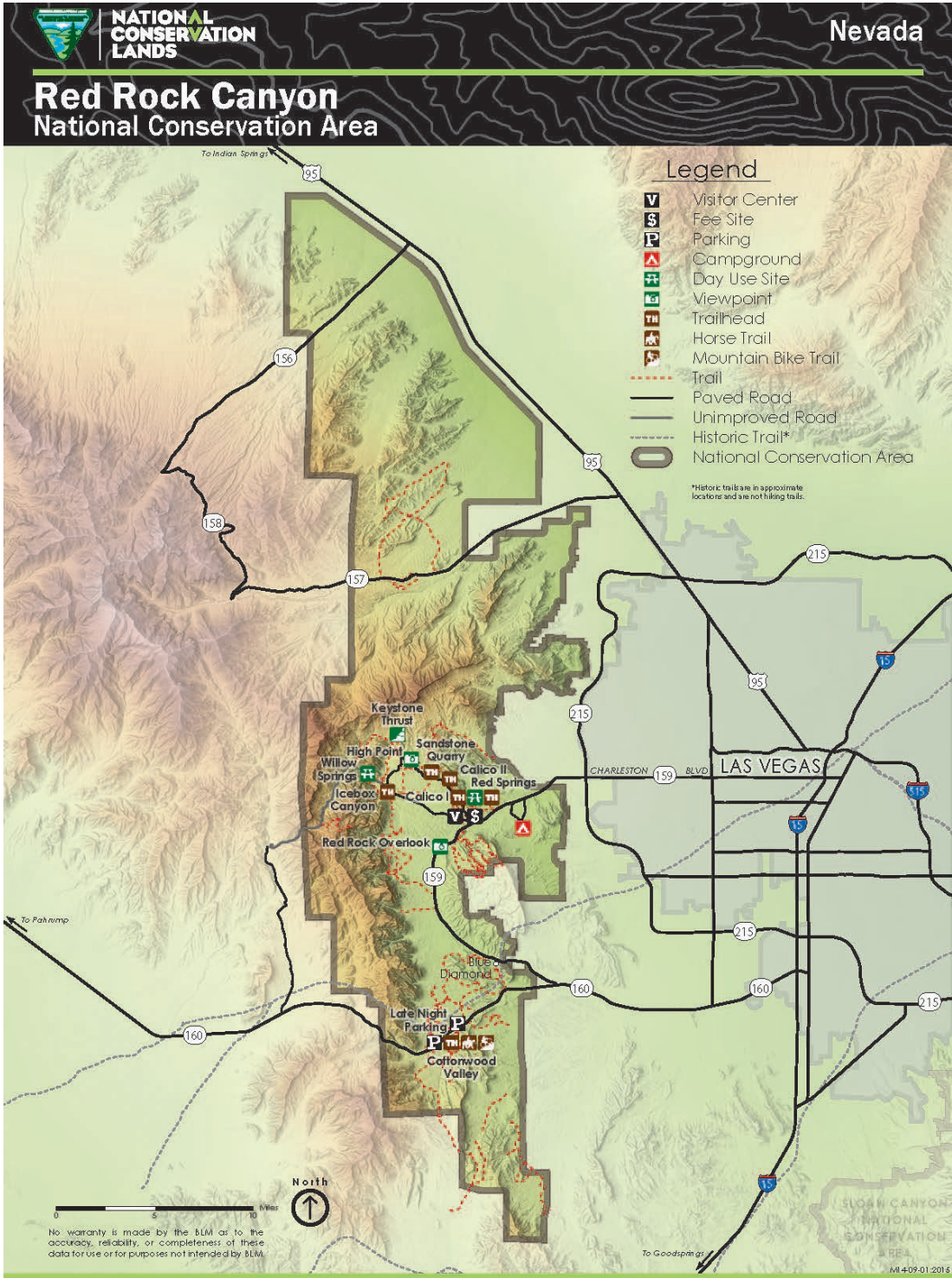
# Red Rock Canyon

National Conservation Area





## Map



# Accomplishments

---

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Park Rangers at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (Red Rock Canyon) ensure visitor safety, protect resources, and maintain infrastructure. Rangers engage with visitors, conduct preventative search and rescue, and offer guidance on activities. They collaborate with resource specialists, including archeological digs, recording archeological and paleontological sites, raptor surveys, invasive snail removals, and bat surveys. They also serve as liaisons with partner organizations such as the Southern Nevada Mountain Biking Association, the Southern Nevada Climbing Coalition, and the Southern Nevada Grotto to foster community engagement and promote responsible recreation. Field rangers assist law enforcement and emergency services when they are first on the scene of multiple accidents that occur on the scenic drive each season.

Our park rangers lead volunteer events focused on trail maintenance, canyon clean-ups, native plant restoration, and graffiti removal. This past year, our native plant groups successfully removed 5 tons of Russian thistle. Trail maintenance efforts included work on our highly-visited trails at Keystone Thrust, Kraft Mountain, Calico Springs, and Moenkopi. We also hosted “Volunteer Vacations” and events for National Public Lands Day, Earth Day, and Youth Volunteer Day.

Our partner, Friends of Red Rock Canyon kicked off our Adopt-a-Trail program in 2024 at Calico Hills Trail which the Neon Foundation adopted. This trail uses BLM/Friends of Red Rock Canyon volunteers for quarterly volunteer events that are managed by the BLM.





# Challenges

---

Some of the greatest challenges at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area in FY24 were vandalism impacting the cultural heritage program. Several archaeological sites were vandalized through scratched graffiti. Various methods have been in development this year to complete graffiti remediation projects and develop methods to prevent additional incidents. Such examples include installing fences and interpretive panels to raise public awareness; installing carsonite posts with "Don't erase our past" decals explaining the delicate nature of rock designs and legal consequences; and working with volunteer groups and BLM partners to bring balance between conservation and recreation. Despite the impacts of vandalism, remediation and prevention projects appear to be successful in preventing continued impacts.



# Visitors

---

Overall visitation to Red Rock Canyon in FY2024 was approximately 2,093,084. Approximately 44% of that visitation was recorded at the 13-mile Scenic Drive fee booth, indicating intensive use of this zone's trails, trailheads, and other recreation facilities. Visitation data are recorded in the outlying, fee-free areas of Red Rock Canyon using TRAFx vehicle (magnetic) counters on designated roads and infrared counters on designated trails. All TRAFx counters are monitored monthly.

Use at Red Rock Canyon continues to trend in similar patterns to past years, where mountain bikers heavily visit the roads and trails near State Route 160 and Blue Diamond. The Scenic Drive, Calico Basin and the trailheads on State Route 159 are the primary attractions for rock climbing, hiking, and general sightseeing. The primitive roads near State Route 157 see regular OHV use.

Recent planning efforts have led to Red Rock Canyon designating an additional 50 miles of existing, user-created singletrack trails for non-motorized use and 16 miles of existing primitive roads for motorized use in a recreation area dubbed the La Madre Foothills. This area is now monitored, and visitation is tracked. This may lead to more recorded visits to Red Rock Canyon in future years. The La Madre Foothills are also immediately adjacent to existing and proposed high-density housing developments, parks owned and operated by the City of Las Vegas, and private property. In designating this network of roads and trails, Red Rock Canyon is better positioned to manage the anticipated recreation pressure while protecting sensitive desert tortoise habitat and other natural and cultural resources.

Illegal dispersed camping continues to be an issue in the Cottonwood Valley trails area. It has increased slightly after the City of Las Vegas began enforcing camping restrictions on nearby properties. Recreation planners have begun the process of establishing designated dispersed camping opportunities in an area identified in the RMP as open to this use. This planning effort and additional public education and outreach, could relieve pressure from other areas in Red Rock Canyon where dispersed camping is discouraged.

# Partnerships

---

Friends of Red Rock Canyon (FRRRC) remains a vital partner for Red Rock Canyon. Nine hundred ninety-five volunteers from FRRRC and other partner groups donated 12,921 hours. FRRRC volunteers assisted visitors at our Visitor Station Front Desk. They helped at 24 outreach events (events with over 20 volunteers), including our annual Earth Day, National Trails Day and National Public Lands Day events. Southern Nevada Conservancy and Get Outdoors Nevada are active partners leading curriculum-based field trips for students. Red Rock Canyon worked with Save Red Rock to identify appropriate opportunities for cooperation, such as conservation-focused trail work, identifying potential locations for future land use planning or acquisitions, resource vulnerabilities and solutions, and general sustainability-focused public information outreach or activities.

The Southern Nevada Conservancy also operates our Fee Booth and the bookstore in our Visitor Center. Other partners include the Southern Nevada Climbing Coalition, Southern Nevada Mountain Biking Association, Howard Hughes Corporation, City of Las Vegas, Clark County, Get Outdoors Nevada, Nevada Friends of Wilderness, Nevada Department of Wildlife Leave, No Trace Foundation, The Access Fund, Blacks in Nature and the Backcountry Horsemen.



A group photo of Friends of Red Rock Canyon volunteers at a clean-up event in the La Madre Foothills.



# Science

---

Several surveys were conducted for various wildlife throughout Red Rock Canyon in 2024. In particular, two BioBlitz events were organized. The first was a two-day event done in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Wildlife to record herpetofauna in Calico Basin, with a focus on searching for Gila Monsters. The second was organized in celebration of National Public Lands Day, with 17 volunteers and six staff participating in recording sightings of wildlife and plants around Pine Creek. Over 100 observations were submitted to iNaturalist and 28 birds belonging to 9 species were reported to eBird.

Staff and volunteers continued to monitor invasive Decollate Snails in Willow Spring, with hundreds of snails removed in 2024. We plan to schedule at least two removal events every year to reduce the invasive snail numbers.

In 2024, Red Rock Canyon implemented roadkill and window strike monitoring. We began opportunistically collecting reptile and amphibian roadkill specimens. These were then shared with NDOW to be stored in a collection at Brigham Young University, documenting type localities of species within Southern Nevada. Recording bird window strikes at the Visitor Center has made it apparent that this is a frequent occurrence and that we should work towards making the glass windows and doors in our facility bird-friendly in the future.

One game camera was deployed at a water resource in 2024 in the same location as previous years. Many sensitive species were recorded visiting the area, but most notably, a Zone-tailed Hawk was recorded at the site in May 2024 – this species is extremely rare for the state of Nevada.



Zone-tailed Hawk captured on a game camera visiting a tenaja in RRCNCA

# Outreach and Special Events

---

Red Rock Canyon Division of Interpretation, Outdoor Education, and Visitor Services has engaged the local community in various meaningful and innovative ways. Notable efforts include ranger-led hikes for community groups and organizations. These groups include Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Asian Pacific Islander American Nevada (OneAPIA), Blacks in Nature (BIN), and the World Affairs Council of Nevada. Interpretive staff also participated in offsite outreach events, including the Annual Gathering for Our Mountain Intergenerational Event, Ice Age Fossils' Nevada Fossil Day, and career days at multiple educational institutions. The Outdoor Education Specialist, with the assistance of interpretive park rangers, offered a variety of programs to local schools and youth groups. The most prominent were curriculum-based field trips offered to local Clark County School District (CCSD) schools, Doral Academy, Vegas Vista Academy, and St. Viator Parish School.

Red Rock Canyon's interpretive staff offered a unique variety of interpretive programs for local audiences and NCA visitors. These programs included guided wilderness hikes, thematic talks and presentations, arts and crafts activities, Desert Tortoise tours, and visitor center orientation walks. These programs covered various interpretive themes, from cultural history to physical sciences. Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center hosted special events like the Las Vegas Astronomical Society stargazing event, the Perseid Meteor Shower viewing party, and the Nuwu Winter Gathering cultural celebration. Staff also frequently partnered with Friends of Red Rock Canyon for public events such as free yoga, art programs, and the yearly Tortoise Trot.

Outdoor Recreation Planners managed about 40 full-time commercial Special Recreation Permits and 16 large events with approximately \$250,000 in fees collected. These permits include 19 climbing companies and schools, 800 weddings, and multiple large-scale exclusive-use events. Local agencies and partners were also incredibly important, with over 40 entities and nearly 60 Letters of Agreement. Red Rock Canyon worked with local, national, and international military and law enforcement units to facilitate training, Search and Rescue groups to maximize public safety, and corporate partners to leverage funding and volunteerism.



# Staff Topic of Choice

---

Red Rock Canyon has undertaken many initiatives aimed at enriching the visitor experience. One standout project garnered significant attention was the native plant holiday display in our Visitor Center during the 2023 Holiday season. This inaugural event showcased a vibrant array of native plants within the visitor center, highlighting the extraordinary species that thrive in the arid Mojave Desert.

This initiative exemplified a remarkable collaboration among various organizations, including BLM, Southern Nevada Conservancy, experts from the Springs Preserve, and Cactus Joe's Nursery. Featured prominently in the display were iconic plants such as Joshua trees, diverse cacti, creosote bushes, and agave.

Informative signage accompanied the plants, allowing visitors to learn about their unique characteristics, Indigenous names, and traditional uses. The beautifully decorated and accessible display became a popular photo opportunity for visitors while interpretive rangers engaged audiences in discussions about the importance of planting native species at home and the ecological sensitivity of these plants in their natural habitats.





**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

**Red Rock Canyon  
National Conservation Area**

1000 Scenic Loop Drive  
Las Vegas, NV 89161  
Phone: 702-515-5000

**Report compiled by:** Boris Poff, Michael Matthes, Michelle Zehentner, Alexandra Rothermel, Jon Prescott, Annette Bennett, Marissa Dowalter-Miracle and Chad Hoing

The mention of company names, trade names, or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by the federal government.