

YOU and the U.S.



June 2014

Welcome to our latest edition of the newsletter - a National Park special!

Did you know...?

...It will be Memorial Day on May 26th 2014. This day commemorates the men and women who died whilst serving in the US armed forces

Quick Trivia

- Which American cyclist is taking part in this year's Tour de France?
- On which day is Memorial Day held in the United States?
- When will the next total solar eclipse be visible in the U.S.?
(hint - answer is on the blog below!)

More information for teachers can be found on our blog - [Education Matters!](#)



National Parks - 1

The U.S. is home to many National Parks. The different landscapes on offer all across the country are huge tourist attractions, with almost 300 million visitors each year! The National Parks cover 401 areas and 84 million acres of land, from the Grand Canyon and Yosemite, to the Everglades. As we approach the summer months, let's take a further look into two of America's treasures.

Joshua Tree National Park

The park is made up of two deserts - the Colorado Desert and the Mojave Desert - that come together to form almost 800,000 acres of parkland. The Colorado Desert covers the south and east of the park and is known for plants such as the "jumping" cholla cactus. The Mojave Desert is slightly cooler and wetter and is home to the infamous Joshua Tree. Many birds, animals and insects depend upon the Joshua Tree for their survival - they eat from the tree and shelter under it.



A Joshua Tree
NPS Photo by Robb Hannawacker - www.nps.gov

Joshua Tree received National Park status in 1994 and has since attracted many more visitors from around the world. It also remains a place to rest for another type of visitor - birds! It is common for birds migrating towards the Pacific, to stop here and rest. There are also many nocturnal animals that reside in Joshua Tree - snakes, sheep, rats and coyotes are amongst those that come out to play at night. There are springs across the park that animals can access, however, many have bodies that are adapted to the climate and are used to surviving on little water. The park is even home to three amphibians - The California tree frog, the red-spotted toad, and the California toad! You can find out more about Joshua Tree's inhabitants - from scorpions to tarantulas, [here](#).

Shenandoah National Park

Shenandoah is a National Park located 75 miles from D.C., in Virginia. The Blue Ridge Mountains span 300 square miles of the park and have two peaks that are more than 4000 feet tall! The oldest rocks in Shenandoah were created over a billion years ago, but the area was first made a National Park in December 1935. Bobcats are a common animal in the park, although they are rarely seen. Other animals that live in Shenandoah are the White-tailed deer, over 200 species of birds, 38 species of fish, ten species of frogs and toads and the famous American Black Bear!



The American Black bear, *Ursus americanus*, is the most famous mammal located in the Shenandoah Valley. The numbers of bears varies, but between 5,000 to 6,000 are reported to live in the State of Virginia. More information can be found [here](#).



The views from Skyline Drive and a waterfall within the park - NPS photo - www.nps.gov

The Skyline drive is 105 miles of road that runs along the top of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It takes about 3 hours to pass along the stretch of road. There are 75 places to stop and take in the view, which expands over 200,000 acres of protected land.

Quick trivia answers: a) Tejay van Garderen; b) the final Monday of May; c) August 2017

National Parks in the U.S.A

Everglades Gettysburg Grand Canyon Joshua Tree
Lake Mead Shenandoah Yellowstone Yosemite

S B C G I P X P Z P B
S E D A L G R E V E G
F M U H B T B E N N E
J N T L P O S P F O T
F O R I C S C O Y S T
T Y S I R H U H O K A
L N B H A E T V S B N
L A A S U N G L E C T
S C X W G A M L M J H
S D A I D N T H I H J
O N N F M D B R T B G
M A G B N O L A E J R
B R E S S A A K M E U
G G R I T H K B F B B
K W E B R Q E S N E S
F V S T N K M M N B Y
B M Q U L I E V L N T
Q L D L I N A U Z T T
R R M A T P D A G C E
C X H D G E F S J G G
Y E L L O W S T O N E
P M X S G L N D H F Z
V W B S T K F X Z N K

HAPPY SUMMER!!!