Utah State Parks

Great Salt Lake State Park

Your park fees provide for the care, protection and enhancement of this park.

Park Location:
The park is located 17 miles west of Salt Lake City on I-80, Exit 104 (Saltair Dr).

Operating Hours:
The park is open year-round.
April through September: 8 a.m. to sunset
October through March: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Address Inquiries To:
Great Salt Lake State Park
P.O. Box 440
Magna, UT 84044
(801) 250-1898
or
Utah State Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 146001
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6001
(801) 538-7220
stateparks.utah.gov

Utah State Parks Mission:
To enhance the quality of life by preserving and providing natural, cultural and recreational resources for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations.

Information contained in this brochure was accurate at the time of printing. Policies, facilities, fees, hours and regulations, etc., change as mandated. For updated information please contact the park.

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Park Guidelines
Please observe the following park regulations to ensure a safe and pleasant visit.

Fires – Campfires are allowed in developed pits only. All developed campsites provide barbeque grills. Firewood is not available.

Fireworks – Explosives, fireworks and firecrackers are prohibited.

Pets – Pets are allowed, but should be on a maximum six-foot leash. Service dogs are the only animals admitted into park buildings. Please clean up after pets.

Plants and Animals – All plants, animals, minerals and other natural features in state parks are protected. It is unlawful to remove, alter or destroy them.

Vandalism – Please help keep our parks beautiful. It is unlawful to mutilate or deface any natural or constructed feature.

Wastewater – It is unlawful to dump or drain wastewater from campers or trailers onto the ground. Utility sinks and a sanitary disposal station are provided.

Quiet Hours – 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.
The lake has no outlet and has such a high concentration of salt because water evaporates off of the lake and leaves the salt and minerals behind. The lake’s salinity levels range between 5% and 28% percent, compared to the ocean at 3%. About 4.5 billion tons of salt are in the lake’s waters. The lake attracts more than 257 bird species, due to the diverse amount of migratory birds that pass through. The lake attracts more than 257 bird species, depending on the season. Ducks, geese, gulls, pelicans, eagles and hundreds of other birds live in the marshes and wetlands surrounding the lake. The lake is an important part of the Pacific and Central Fly Ways for migratory birds and part of the Northern Hemispheric Shore Bird Reserve.

The shores and nearby wetlands are also home to a number of reptiles and mammals. The lake has been visited for recreational purposes by many, including those who have ventured to the coast of Lake Bonneville. However, the lake is unique in the knowledge that no fish live in the lake. Only algae, brine shrimp, brine fly larvae, and a few other species survive in the lake’s waters. Brine shrimp are a major source of food for migratory birds. They are also valuable for their hard-walled eggs or cysts, which are commercially harvested and sold worldwide as fish and fowl food. Brine shrimp harvesting boats can be seen on Great Salt Lake October through January.

Great Salt Lake State Park is a gateway to the Great Salt Lake, with opportunities for birding, boating, kayaking, biking, and sweeping views of the lake. Hundreds of thousands of migratory birds stop by Great Salt Lake each year, making the marina a popular destination for birders. The marina offers a chance to explore this unique inland sea, with a boat launch, observation deck, beach, visitor center, gift shop and camping.

The first sailing craft was launched in 1847 and by the 1860’s, boating for pleasure began on Great Salt Lake. Various cruises and boat races were held throughout the late 19th century. In 1877 the Great Salt Lake Yacht Club was established and continues to operate today, making it among the oldest in the nation. The Yacht Club still holds sailboat and remote control sailboat races at the marina.

Four rivers and numerous streams empty into Great Salt Lake, carrying dissolved minerals. The lake has no outlet and has such a high concentration of salt because water evaporates off of the lake and leaves the salt and minerals behind. The lake’s salinity levels range between 5% and 28% percent, compared to the ocean at 3%. About 4.5 billion tons of salt are in the lake, and commercial removal of salt equals about 2.3 million tons annually.

Fish and most other aquatic life cannot tolerate the stress of the hyper saline water. However, brine shrimp, brine fly larvae, and algae thrive in the lake.

Black Rock, located about a mile west of the marina, can be seen from both the marina and I-80. This landmark was first seen by Brigham Young three days after he arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. It has also been the site of several beach resorts that eventually fell prey to the ever-fluctuating lake level.

Before the 1960’s, most early water craft on Great Salt Lake were for industrial purposes, including everything from mineral extraction to ferrying livestock. Commercial vessels also assisted in the construction of the Transcontinental Railway, contributing to Great Salt Lake’s role as a crucial transportation hub.