

Lower Colorado River Mohave Water Trail



Mohave Water Trail—Lake Mead National Recreation Area

The 76-mile long Mohave Water Trail stretches along the Arizona and Nevada shorelines of Lake Mohave and the Colorado River below Davis Dam to Laughlin/Bullhead City. The Mohave Water Trail lies wholly within the ***Lake Mead National Recreation Area*** managed by the National Park Service. The Bureau of Reclamation has management responsibility for the security zone around Davis Dam and for some withdrawn lands. The National Park Service and the Bureau of Reclamation have designated the Mohave Water Trail as an official Water Trail. The Water Trail is open 365 days a year and 24-hours per day. The Mohave Water Trail starts where the Black Canyon National Water Trail ends, providing a seamless transition.

Houseboating on Mohave Water



What makes the Mohave Water Trail so fascinating and significant is the opportunity it offers for exploration. The Trail provides access to: high water quality; 190 miles of shoreline and around 190 coves; beautiful sandy beaches; areas of high scenic quality and geological interest; and important cultural and historic resources associated with the Colorado River, including submerged cultural resources. The history of the Mohave Water Trail area reflects the history of the American Southwest. From the Native peoples and Spanish explorers to early settlers and World War II soldiers, the stories of these intrepid adventurers can be seen in the historic sites and cultural artifacts featured along this water corridor. A “Mohave Water Trail Guidebook” is presently being developed that will tell these fascinating stories and help develop a greater appreciation for the cultures, history and stories associated with this vital resource.

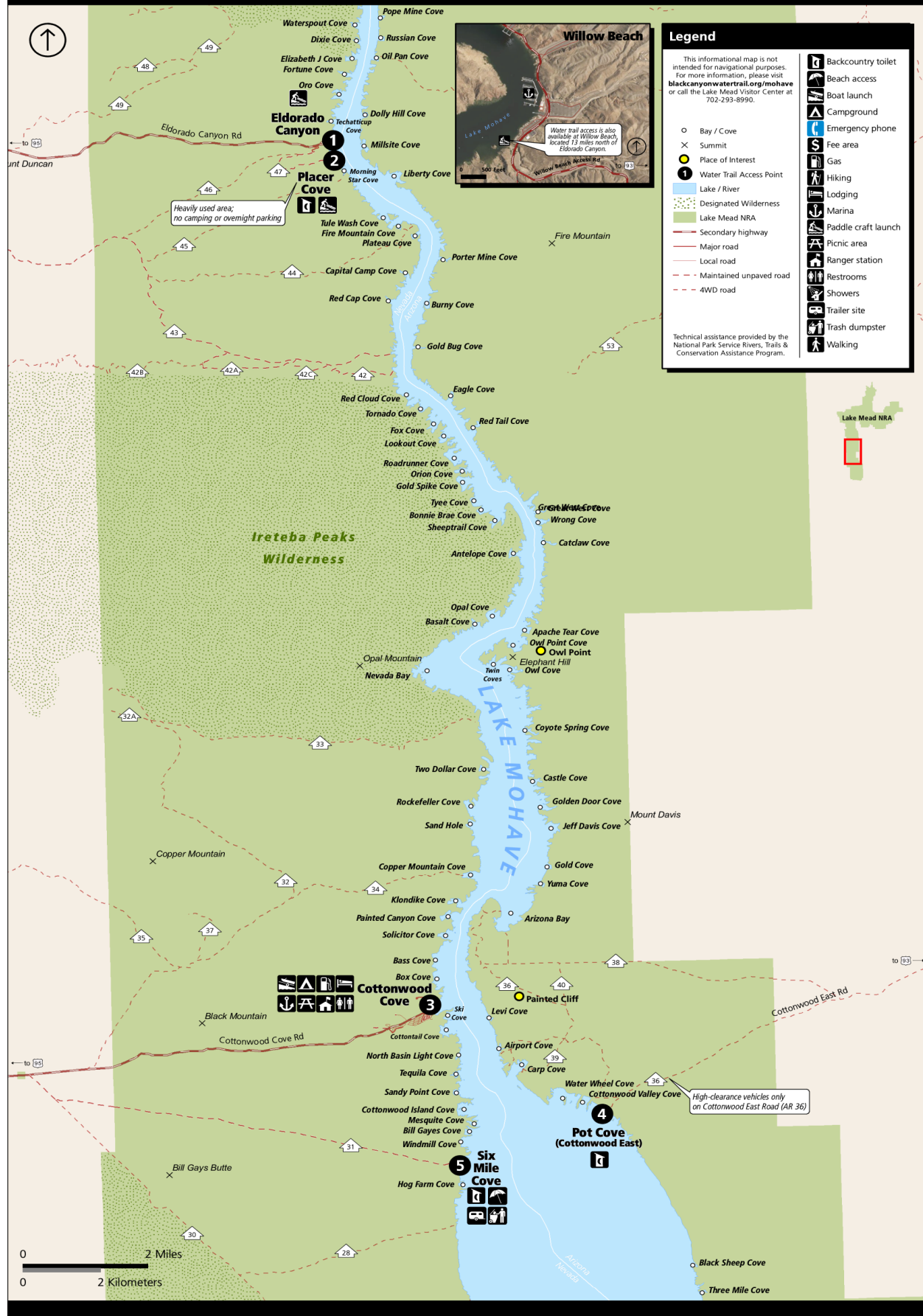
For those using paddle craft, there is a portage planned around Davis Dam, allowing for use of a two-mile section of free-flowing Colorado River before reaching the take-out spot at the Laughlin Bridge. There are multiple access points along the Trail, allowing for a wide range of choices for experiencing different segments. There are 7 primary access points on the Nevada side and 10 on the Arizona side of the trail.

Lake Mohave, a reservoir on the Colorado River, was created in 1951 following the completion of Davis Dam near present-day Laughlin, Nevada, and Bullhead City, Arizona. Named for the Mohave Indians who previously inhabited this region of the



Arizona & Nevada - North Side

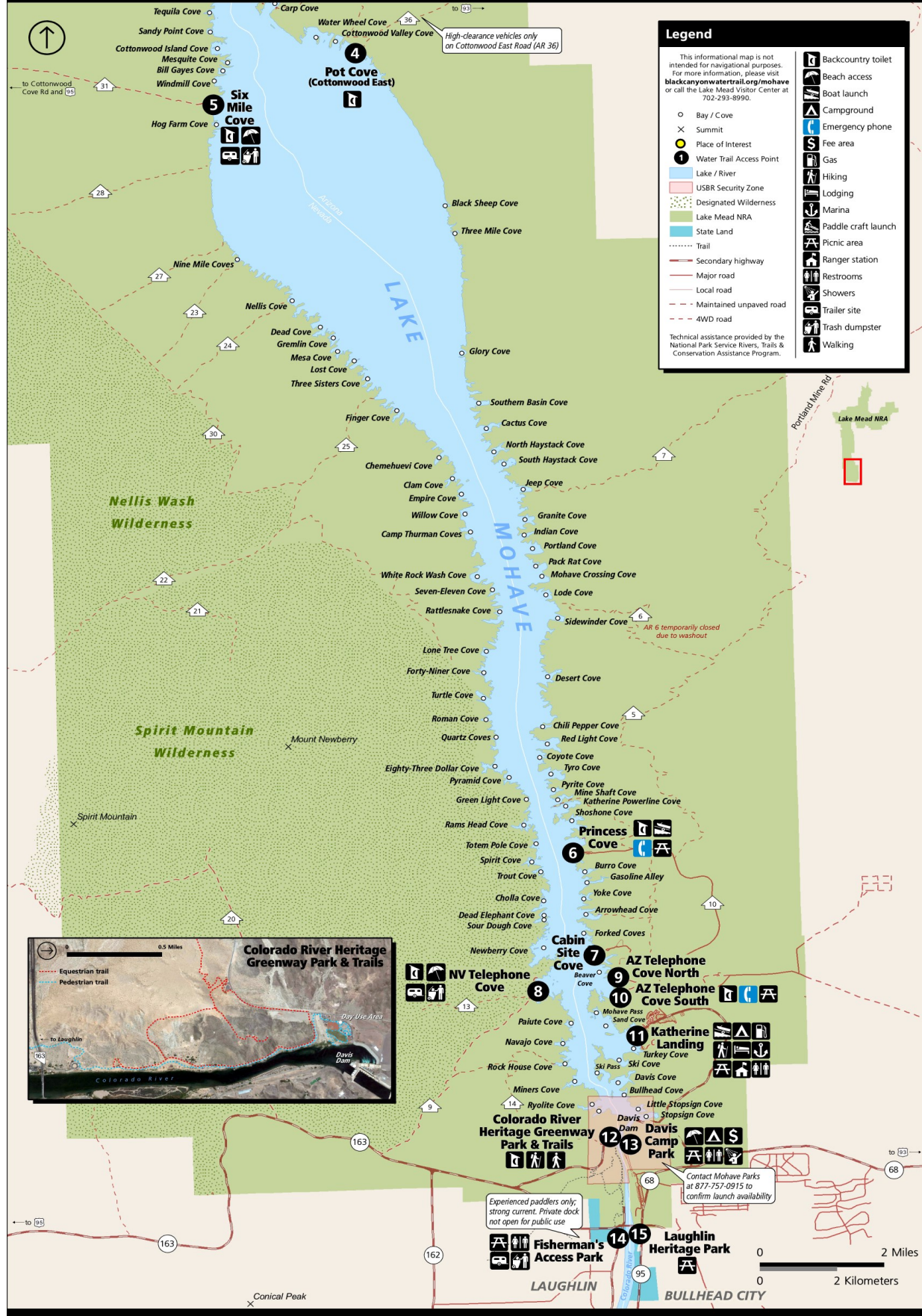
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Mohave Water Trail

Arizona & Nevada - South Side

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Colorado River Valley. Lake Mohave extends approximately 55 miles along the valley from Davis Dam to Willow Beach, straddling the southern Nevada and northwestern Arizona border, which follows the original river channel. (4)

Since there is normally only a 6-8 foot fluctuation in water levels on Lake Mohave from the high water during the warmer months to the lower water levels in the colder months, the Trail offers a predictable experience for users. Allowable uses along the Mohave Water Trail include: motor boating; sailing; waterskiing



and other associated activities such as tubing; canoeing, kayaking and paddle-boarding; swimming; fishing; camping; picnicking; scuba diving; snorkeling; and hiking to points of interest and wildlife viewing.

There is a wide variety of services available for users on the Mohave Water Trail. These services are detailed in Lake Mead National Recreation Area's Visitor Use Directory available on their website. There are 16 outfitters who either rent paddle craft or are licensed to guide groups on the Mohave Water Trail. There are five companies licensed to provide scuba instruction. There is shuttle service available and seven permittees providing fishing guide services. Lake Mead concessioners provide full marina services at Cottonwood Cove and Katherine landing, as well as restaurants and overnight accommodations. They also provide boat rentals from motor boats, patio boats, houseboats, and paddle craft. (3)

There is an entrance and boating use fee at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Fees are not collected at each access site, only at Cottonwood Cove, Katherine's Landing and Davis Camp. There is no fee for use of the 2-mile section of the trail below Davis Dam.

Striped bass have become the major sport fish in Lake Mohave. This species reproduces in the seasonally warm reaches of the reservoir and moves into cold-water areas as they become larger, and eventually preys upon other fish. Largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, channel catfish, and sunfish provide the remaining sport fishery.



The major forage species present, are threadfin shad, bluegill, green sunfish, and crayfish. Large striped bass are also known to prey on carp. Populations of all the forage species have remained fairly abundant. A fishing license from either Arizona or Nevada, to which a special-use stamp from the opposite state is attached, is required for those wishing to fish. (5)

Nevada Access Points from North to South

Eldorado Canyon: This is the starting point for the Mohave Water Trail and the finishing point for the Black Canyon National Water Trail. Eldorado Canyon is south of Boulder City and is accessed via U.S. 95 and Nevada Route #165. The turnoff to Nevada #165 (Eldorado Canyon Road) off U.S. Highway 95 is about 10 miles south of Railroad Pass. The road is paved all the way to Eldorado Canyon except for a quarter mile section on Lake Mead Road #47 to get to the informal paddle craft launching and take-out area.



The Eldorado Canyon Area has a fascinating history and is very scenic with views into both the Eldorado and Ireteba Peaks Wilderness Areas. It is a region of colorful landscapes, dramatic geologic formations and scenic vistas of Lake Mohave. This rugged area consists of jagged volcanic peaks cut by wide washes and narrow canyons. Elevations vary from 650 on Lake Mohave to 5,060 feet on the highest volcanic peaks.

Placer Cove: Located about half-mile south of Eldorado Canyon and accessible on the same paved road that goes to Eldorado Canyon. There is one mile of dirt road that goes from the paved Eldorado Canyon

Road to Placer Cove on Lake Mead Road #47 (Placer Cove Road). Placer Cove is a protected cove and a good place for launching and take-out. There is not a launching ramp but you can launch small motor boats and paddle craft from that location.



Cottonwood Cove - Is accessible by a paved road (Cottonwood Cove Road) off of U.S. 95 at Searchlight. The area is very scenic and offers a full range of services for the visiting public. The National Park Service offers

two campgrounds and picnic areas, a boat launching ramp and public dock. There are swimming areas, both adjacent to the public boat dock and at the Resort. Cottonwood Marina and Resort is a full service facility with a large marina, motel, café, store, fish cleaning station, boat repair, boat decontamination services, auto/boat fuel, dry boat storage, and a full-service RV Park. A full range of boat rental is available from smaller fishing boats to ski boats, patio boats, personal watercraft and houseboats. Houseboat rentals are available



from 2 to 7 or more days and are available.

Six-Mile Cove – Accessible from the paved Cottonwood Cove Road (7 miles) at Searchlight and Lake Mead Backcountry Road #31 dirt road (6 miles). Lake Mead #31 is a wide dirt road and maintained but high clearance vehicles are recommended. There is a wide sandy beach here and the area is popular for camping, picnicking, swimming, fishing and boating. You can launch paddle craft from this location.



Nevada Telephone Cove – This Cove is accessed via Nevada Highway 163 (paved) and Lake Mead Road #9 (unpaved). The unpaved portion on Lake Mead #9 is 4 miles but is accessible by 2-wheel drive vehicles. This is a very popular spot for camping, picnicking, swimming, fishing and boating. You can launch small boats and paddle craft at this location. There is a beautiful sandy beach. It is a great place to camp on the shoreline or spend the day sunning, swimming, fishing or picnicking . There is a 7-day camping limit. Vault toilets are provided and there are some shade trees present.



Nevada Telephone Cove



Nevada Telephone Cove

Laughlin Heritage Greenway Park: The Laughlin Heritage Greenway Park & Trail System on the Nevada side of the Trail extends from Davis Dam to the Laughlin Bridge, a distance of 2 miles. Small boats can be launched from this complex and there are excellent day-use facilities.



Laughlin Heritage Greenway Park



Laughlin Heritage Greenway Park

Fisherman's Cove – This is the access site on the south end of the Mohave Water Trail. It is located just south of the Laughlin Bridge. There is a protected boat launching ramp and courtesy dock here. Both motor boats and paddle craft can launch or take-out from this site.



Fisherman's Cove—Laughlin

Arizona Access Sites from south to north

Laughlin Bridge East Side Access Site – This site is just across the Laughlin Bridge (Highway 163) on the Arizona side. There is a picnic table and informal area for paddle craft take-out or launching where the river current is mild.

Davis Camp South – Davis Camp is a Mohave County Park within the Lake Mead National Recreation Area under lease from the National Park Service and Bureau of Reclamation. There is a paved boat launching ramp and courtesy dock. Davis Camp also offers vacation homes and bunkhouses for rent, spaces with full RV hookups, and campsites along the beach for campers and tent spots. Eight shower buildings are located throughout the park and laundry facilities are available, as well as jet ski rentals. This is a very heavily used and popular park. There is also a trail being built within the park and along the Colorado



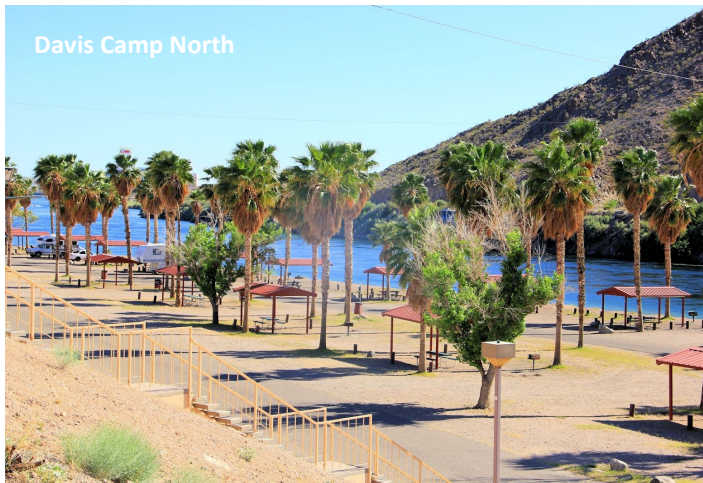
Laughlin Bridge East Side Access Point



Davis Camp South

do River south of the park called the Arizona Heritage Trail that will follow along the Colorado River and connect to the Laughlin Heritage Greenway Trail System on the Nevada side. There is an entrance fee charged by Mohave County.

Davis Camp North – This site is also within the Davis Camp Park operated by Mohave County under lease from the National Park Service and Bureau of Reclamation. It is on the north side of the park just below Davis Dam. This site offer an excellent take-out and launch site for paddle craft and small boats. There is an entrance fee charged by Mohave County.



Katherine Landing - Located about one mile north of Davis Dam on the southeastern shore of Lake Mohave, just north of the communities of Laughlin, Nevada and Bullhead City, Arizona. This is a very scenic area that offers a wide range of land and water recreational activities. From Katherine Landing, you get an outstanding view of Spirit Mountain and the Newberry Mountain chain. Rising to an elevation of 5,639 feet above sea level, Spirit Mountain and the surrounding canyons are sacred grounds for the Yuman tribes of the lower Colorado River. The mountain plays a prominent role in the religion and mythology of these people. They believe the mountain (called Avikwame by the Mohave people and Wikame by the Hualapai) is the spiritual birthplace of the tribes.



The National Park Service has a boat launching ramp, courtesy dock, campground, picnic area and areas for swimming at Katherine Landing. There is a full-service marina operated by a private concessioner under contract with the National Park Service featuring small boat rentals such as ski boats, patio boats, fishing boats and personal watercraft. The marina also has slips, a gas dock and repair facilities, a lakeside general store, a tackle and bait shop, and a restaurant and lounge. A 51-room motel and RV park offer comfortable accommodations. There is a Lake Mead National Recreation Area entrance station and fee.

Arizona Telephone Cove South— Located in a scenic protected cove just north of Katherine Landing with outstanding views of Spirit Mountain and the Newberry Range. There is a sandy beach, vault toilets, and 6 sheltered picnic ramadas, and a roped off swimming area. Picnicking, swimming and boating are allowed. There is a Lake Mead National Recreation Area entrance station and fee.



Arizona Telephone Cove

Arizona Telephone Cove North – Located in the cove just north of Arizona Telephone Cove South. Accessible by a paved road and short section of good gravel road. There is a gravel boat launching ramp that can serve smaller motor craft and paddle craft. There are 2 gravel boat launching ramps, and trash dumpsters. Paddle craft can be launched from this site. There is a Lake Mead National Recreation Area entrance station and fee.

Cabin Site Point – Located about 3 miles north of Davis Dam by a paved road and short section of gravel road. The Point has nice sandy swimming beaches on each side and is a popular launching place for small boats and paddle craft. It is a popular wind surfing and day use area. There is a Lake Mead National Recreation Area entrance station and fee.



Wind Surfing at Cabin Site Point

Princess Cove – Located about 8 miles north of Davis Dam and accessible by a paved road. This is a highly scenic area with views looking west of Spirit Mountain and the Newberry Range and looking east at the Sleeping Princess formation. There is a paved boat launching ramp, ample parking, 6 sheltered picnic ramada, and restroom. Picnicking, swimming, boating, wind surfing, and paddle craft are allowed. There is a Lake Mead National Recreation Area entrance station and fee.



Princess Cove



Princess Cove Launch Ramp

Cottonwood East – Located about 19 miles north of Davis Dam and accessible by a 22-mile long dirt road. There is a vault toilet and informal launching area for paddle craft. Camping, picnicking, swimming and boating are allowed.



Willow Beach



Cottonwood East

Willow Beach – Located about 49 miles north of Davis Dam and accessible by a paved road. Willow Beach is a major access point for the Black Canyon Water Trail but also serves as an access point for those traveling further south to experience the Mohave Water Trail. Willow Beach is located at the end of the Willow Beach access road. This road is located 11 miles east of Hoover Dam on U.S. Highway 93. Forever Resorts, under contract with the National Park Service, operates a marina, store, café, slip rentals and boat rentals, including canoes and kayaks, ski boats, patio boats, houseboats, and personal watercraft. The National Park Service has picnicking facilities, a launch ramp and a state-of-the-art fishing pier. Another highlight of the area is a campground with full hookups for power, water and wastewater. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a National Fish Hatchery here that mostly raises endangered and threatened native fish species. The Hatchery is opened to visitors to view the operation. There is also a 1.5 mile trail along the Colorado River. There is a Lake Mead National Recreation Area entrance station and fee.

Important Points of Interest:

Eldorado Canyon: In the 1850's, prospectors began to arrive and gold was discovered in the Eldorado Canyon about 1859 and soon rich mines were developed. In the 1860's the area was bursting with a rowdy population, many of these said to be drifters from the Civil War. (3)

Eldorado Canyon was equally well known for its three largest mines, the Techatticup, Wall Street, and Sav-



General Store at Nelson



Historic Techatticup Mine

age which yielded millions of dollars during their nearly 70 years of operation. As the ore was extracted from the many area mines, it was then transported to Nelson Landing at the mouth of Eldorado Canyon on the Colorado River and shipped by steamboat to Yuma, Arizona for overland shipment to San Francisco.

Eldorado Canyon was notorious for its feuds and shootings, So extreme was the lawlessness that in 1867 a small detachment of infantrymen from Las Vegas Fort was stationed at the mouth of the Colorado River, charged with keeping an eye on things. A total of 136 soldiers rotated through the camps. In 1880's more men lived in Eldorado Canyon than all of the Las Vegas Valley. Steamboats ran the Colorado River for over 40 years. Two of the most famous Indians were raised in the canyon – Avote killing 5 men and Queho killing over 20 men. (3)



Eldorado Canyon

The discovery of gold and influx of miners and associated development of the mines and infrastructure caused friction with nearby Native American settlements in the region, presenting significant new hazards and opportunities for increased transportation, trade goods, and employment. Violence against the Native people broke out as pressures for Native lands and resources brought retaliation. The military was called in to manage the situation, which led to

forced relocation of tribal communities to reservations. (3)

Eldorado Canyon has a high level of cultural and religious significance to Native American tribes. The Mojave oral tradition describes Eldorado Canyon and Spirit Mountain as “being at the center of the Earth and a central point in the creation of the world.” (1)

Cottonwood Island (Cottonwood Basin, Cottonwood Valley, Cottonwood Station)

Cottonwood Island, near the present Cottonwood Cove Area, once was part of a river crossing with a bottomland with a large grove of rich vegetation including cottonwoods, willows, and mesquites. It was a perfect place to raise livestock. The island was approximately ten miles long and three miles wide. In the late



Eldorado Canyon



Historic Steamboat

1840s, the best complete records of cottonwood distribution, abundance, and size were documented when soldiers and scientists began working in the area of the lower Colorado River to conduct various surveys. Then in 1846, the United States and Mexico went to war for land acquisition which included the lower Colorado River. The abundant and rapidly growing cottonwood, willow, and mesquite trees found on Cottonwood Island were a great source of fuel for steamships. (1)

In the 1930s, Cottonwood Island was a resource for the Homestake Mine in the Newberry Mountains. The cyanide mixing plant was located on the Island to process gold and silver ore. In 1953, mining operations ceased as Davis Dam was completed, which flooded Cottonwood Island along with the mine processing plants, under Lake Mohave waters. Today, Cottonwood Island is no longer visible on Lake Mohave. (1)

Gasoline Alley: This is a long narrow finger cove on the Arizona side of Lake Mohave several miles south of the Princess Cove Access Site. The cove extends nearly a half a mile with steep side walls and is quite picturesque. It is a popular spot for boaters when the wind is blowing and has gained a reputation for cliff jumping which is an activity not promoted by the National Park Service for safety reasons.

Nevada Telephone Cove: Nevada Telephone Cove provides foot or back country road access to Lower Grapevine Canyon., a beautiful canyon with a fascinating geological mix of coarse-grained granitic rocks and terraced deposits of white alluvial gravel. A diversity of plants can be found in the vicinity of Nevada





Smoke Tree

Telephone Cove. One of the more fascinating species is the “Smoke Tree.” The cluster of around 140 trees found at the cove near represents the northernmost reaches of the species' natural range. Spiny and brownish-gray, the smoke trees in the Southwest have tremendous survival instincts. Exploding with delicate blue blossoms in late spring, they drop all their

flowers and leaves by summer to conserve water. Using chlorophyll in their bark instead of their leaves, the trees convert sunlight into energy through photosynthesis. (6)

Spirit Mountain: The majestic granite spires of Spirit Mountain can be seen along the lower stretches of the Mohave Water Trail on the west shoreline. On September 8, 1999, Spirit Mountain became the first Native American site in Nevada to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Mountain is a sacred place to 10 Native American tribes in Southern Nevada, California, Arizona, and Mexico who consider the mountain the beginning of creation and the spiritual and geographical center of the world. Tribal elders refer to the mountain as “The place where shamans dream.” The mountain, also known as “Avi Kwa’ Ame,” rises from the desert floor near Lake Mohave and is capped by white granite bluffs. Mojave oral traditions describe long and detailed narratives of “traditions of the actions of the Creator and other spirit beings who create and interact with this peak and landscape features.” The Mojave Tribe is considered the caretakers of the Mountain. (1)



Lower Grapevine Canyon



Mohave Water Trail near Katherine Landing—Spirit Mountain in Distance

Katherine Gold Mine: The historic Katherine Mine is on the Arizona side of the Trail just north of Katherine Landing. It is not open to the public for safety reasons. Mining activity began in the Katherine-Union Pass area in the mid-1860s with the discovery of gold. The Pyramid and Gold Cycle mines, both in the present-day South Telephone Cove area; the Homestake Mine, across the river in Nevada; and the Sheeptrails Mine in the Union Pass area, were the more primary mines established during this time.



Spirit Mountain



Sprit Mountain

In 1900, Katherine Mine was discovered by S.C. Baggs. It was developed down to the 300-foot level by the New Comstock Mining Company by 1904. The company built a mill that could process 75 tons of ore a day was completed in June 1925. It was later enlarged to process 250 tons per day, and ran almost continuously through 1927. (1)

Between 1933 and 1934, when the price of gold rose, many old mines were reopened. The Gold Standard Gold Mining Company acquired water rights in the area, and began operating the mill in September 1933 to process ore from local mines. The Company acquired title to the Katherine Mine in 1935, and kept it in 1937 to 1940. The mill ran continuously until April 15, 1943, when it was closed by the War Production Board. At the start of World War II, the mine shut down permanently. (1)



Historic Katherine Mine

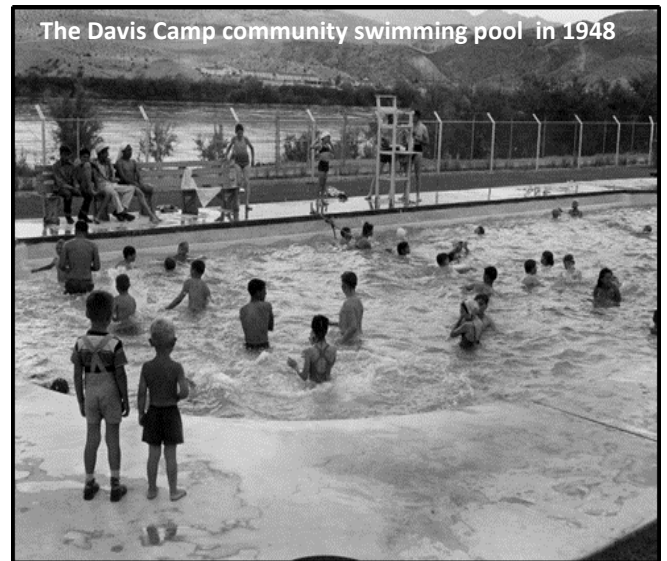
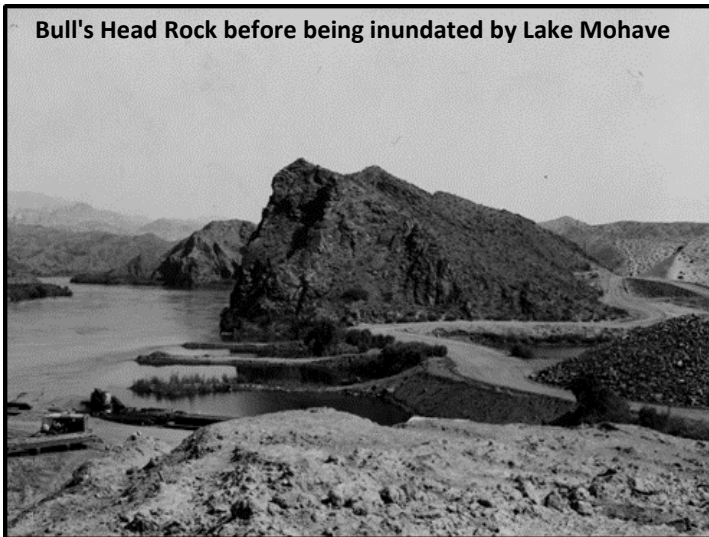
Inscription Rock: Inscription Rock is a significant petroglyph site just below Davis Dam on the Arizona side at Davis Camp. The Rock has associations with Spirit Mountain. Historically, Inscription Rock



Inscription Rock

was shared by several cultural groups including the Mojave, Chemehuevi, and Hualapai. The Mojave and Chemehuevi (one of sixteen bands of the Southern Paiute) occupied areas west of the Colorado River. The Mojave also occupied the east side of the Colorado River from Cottonwood Island south to present-day Topock, Arizona. This site has been used by tribes to engage the powers of Spirit Mountain remotely and/or in conjunction with ritual visits to the mountain. Inscription Rock continues to have a spiritual importance to modern tribal members. (1)

Davis Government Camp: At Davis Dam, the “Contractor’s Camp” for Davis Dam on the Nevada side of the river housed the construction staff and their families in apartments, trailers, and two-bedroom houses, as well as in surplus war housing barracks brought in from Boulder City, NV’s Camp Williston (originally known as Camp Sibert) that was established to help guard Hoover Dam and the nearby Basic Magnesium Plant during World War II. (1)



The “Government Camp” on the Arizona side of the river housed the Bureau of Reclamation staff who managed the construction contract. The area had a population of approximately 2,200 people in 1946. Common facilities included mess halls, a recreation hall/theater, a school, a gas station, sports courts, and a swimming pool. Groceries and clothing stores, a post office, and a barber/beauty shop were located within the Govern-

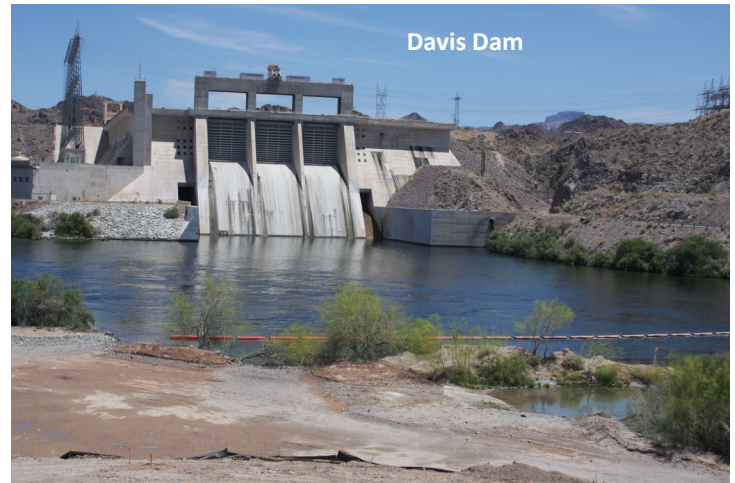


ment Camp on the Arizona side. (1)

Laughlin Heritage Park & Trail System: The Heritage System was a collaborative initiative by Clark County, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, Colorado River Heritage Partnership, and Laughlin Chamber of Commerce. This was truly a transformative project as it has totally revitalized the landscape along the Colorado River from the Laughlin Bridge all the way up to Davis Dam. Paddle craft can launch from the Pyramid Peak Park section of the complex.

The five new trails are all distinctive in character and offers different experiences. The Exploration Trail is largely arrayed along the length of the Colorado River from State Road 163 to Davis Dam (the North Reach) The Exploration Trail also crosses into Laughlin proper, where it assumes more of an urban identity. This portion of the project is called the South Reach. In Laughlin, the project consists of a major trailhead, the southern landing of the pedestrian bridge over the highway, and an improved urban streetscape along Casino Drive. The entire banks of the Colorado River along this trail has been re-contoured to achieve a more natural topographic condition and aesthetic experience. There is no fee.

Davis Dam: Construction of Davis Dam was a requirement of the 1944 Water Treaty with Mexico to regulate water released from Hoover Dam for delivery to Mexico. Lake Mohave is used for that purpose through integrated operations with Hoover Dam. The 200 feet high dam was completed in 1953 and self-guided tours of the dam and power plant may be taken. (4)



1. Bureau of Reclamation: Mohave River Guide History Supplement
2. Lower Colorado River Water Trail Alliance: www.lcrwatertrailalliance.com/mohave-water-trail
3. <http://www.legendsofamerica.com/nv-eldorado.html>
4. Bureau of Reclamation: www.usbr.gov/lc/region/pao/brochures/davis.html
5. Nevada Department of Wildlife: www.ndow.org/Bodies_Of_Water/Lake_Mohave/
6. Desert USA: www.desertusa.com/flora/smoke-tree.html

