Important Information for School Groups
Watarrka National Park

Department of Tourism, Sport & Culture
Parks Wildlife & Heritage Division  Last update: September 2019
Getting there

Located southwest of Alice Springs, Watarrka National Park can be accessed by 3 routes:
- 2WD access from Alice Springs or Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is via the Stuart Highway, Lasseter Highway and Luritja Road.
- 4WD access from Alice Springs is using the Red Centre Way via the Mereenie Loop (permit required) or Ernest Giles road.
- Coaches can access the Canyon and Kathleen Springs carparks.

Fuel is available from Kings Canyon Resort (9 km from Kings Canyon) and Kings Creek Station (30 km from Kings Canyon).

FACILITIES

The Kings Canyon and Kathleen Springs picnic area includes vehicle parking suitable for coaches, caravans and cars. As well as shaded picnic areas and gas barbecues. We recommend you bring your own drinking water to the Park, there are top up stations for water at both the Canyon and Kathleen Springs picnic area.

Kings Canyon has flushing toilets, hand wash sinks and running water provided at the picnic area.

There is no camping allowed at the Canyon or Kathleen Springs. Accommodation can be arranged at Kings Creek Station and Kings Canyon Resort, situated nearby.

Annual Temperatures in Alice Springs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April to September</th>
<th>October to March</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(cool season)</td>
<td>(hot season)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime Max: 15-35°C</td>
<td>Daytime Max: 28-45°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night time lows can get down to -5°C</td>
<td>Night time lows: 14-28°C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average rainfall for the area is approximately 300 mm per annum and can occur at any time of the year. Be aware that flooding after rainfall events may result in the closure of some roads and walking tracks.
HEADING ON THE KINGS CANYON RIM WALK? BE SAFE!

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY

A well informed group is a safe group. In addition to your specific school excursion policies, it is important that teachers and accompanying adults read and understand the following safety information.

Most visitor incidents at Watarrka National Park are entirely preventable. Rangers regularly rescue students on the Rim Walk from preventable incidents including dehydration, fainting / dizziness from not enough food (not having breakfast) and conditions such as asthma.

Due to the location and sometimes extreme environmental conditions, simple injuries can quickly turn very serious. Please ensure you are familiar with the location of the First Aid Boxes, emergency procedures and prepare your group well (see page 7).

Key Safety Information

• Ensure you assess the health, fitness and preparedness of your group before choosing a walk. The Rim Walk and South Wall Return Walk are strenuous day walks and visitors should have at least a moderate level of fitness and be in good health.

• Ensure your group wears protective clothing such as a long sleeved cotton shirt, broad brimmed hat and sturdy well worn in shoes. Reapply sunscreen often.

• If it is going to be hot, plan to start your walk as early as possible.

• Keep to marked tracks and always stand at 2 metres or more away from the edge and behind installed signage. Accidents can occur as a result of stepping backwards, being caught off balance or lack of awareness. Accidents involving a fall can be completely avoided by simply staying two metres from the edge at all times.

• Understand the Emergency Response Procedure, and know the location of Emergency Call Devices (ECDs) and First Aid Boxes (see page 7 & 8 of this guide)

• Carry a satellite phone with you, call the Kings Canyon Medical Clinic, (08) 8956 7807 in case of an emergency.

• Do not throw rocks. Directly below the rim wall is the Creek Walk and walkers could be seriously injured or killed.

• Do not allow your group to lie down and peer over the edge, or pose for photographs in unsafe locations.

• There is no drinking water available on the Rim so please ensure you take sufficient supplies with you. There are taps and bubblers available at the canyon carpark to refill bottles before your walk.

You are ultimately responsible for the safety of your group, please make sure you are well informed and understand all the information provided before heading out on the Rim Walk.

Respect the National Park

Watarrka National Park is a very important place, with significant natural and cultural values.

Unfortunately school groups are the among the worst offenders when it comes to damage to the Park's environment. Graffiti on the rocks, building stone cairns, littering, vandalising trees and breaking rocks are all offences under the the Territory Parks and Wildlife Act. Penalties do apply. Please ensure your group is well informed and does not engage in this behaviour. Please keep this special area a place for others to enjoy for years to come.

Swimming is not allowed in the Garden of Eden. We believe healthy water sources result in healthy plants, animals and people and we encourage you to enjoy and respect the Garden of Eden as a haven and source of life in an arid environment. Traditional Owners have also asked that people not swim. Climbing around the back of the waterhole or near the top of the waterfall is strictly prohibited.

Heat Management

On days when the temperature is forecast to be 36°C* or above, visitors wishing to undertake the Rim Walk need to start their walk before 9.00am.

On days when the temperature is forecast to be 36°C* or above, visitors wishing to undertake the South Wall Return Walk need to start their walk before 11.00am. Signs at the Park will be updated daily to indicate current access conditions.


Contact the Rangers

We want you to have a safe and positive experience. Watarrka Rangers can provide a short talk on Safety and Emergency Response for the group prior to heading on the Rim Walk, depending on Ranger availability. Get in touch with the Rangers as early as possible to arrange this by calling; (08) 89567460.
Watarrka National Park

Locality Map

Larapinta Drive (Red Centre Way) to Alice Springs - 4WD recommended
327 km via Hermannsburg
394 km via Gosse Bluff & Glen Helen
(Distances from Kings Canyon Resort)

Kathleen Springs
Ranger Station
Emergency Contact Only

Kings Canyon Picnic Area

Kings Canyon Resort

Ranger Station
Emergency Contact Only

Watarrka - Facilities & Activities
- Information
- Short Walks
- Toilets
- Overnight Walks
- Ranger Station
- Lookouts
- Parking Area
- Wheelchair Access
- Drinking Water
- Emergency Call Device
- Picnic Facilities
- Gas BBQ
- First Aid

- Fuel
- Meals
- Cafe
- Accommodation
- Caravan Camping
- Telephone
- Plane Landing

On Park Locality
- Off Park Locality
- Sealed Road
- Unsealed Road
- 4WD Track
- Park Boundary
- Cafe
- Accommodation
- Bush camping
- Fuel
- Caravan camping

Park Map

Distances from Kings Creek Station to Alice Springs via Ernest Giles Road 290 km
Alice Springs via Luritja Road 430 km
Walks of Watarrka National Park

There are five main walks in Watarrka National Park, this is the main activity most visitors will do when visiting the Park. When choosing a walk, consider the health and fitness of your group, the difficulty of the walk and weather conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Walk</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Walk Time</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Track Markers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kings Canyon Rim Walk</td>
<td>6 km loop</td>
<td>3 - 4 hours</td>
<td>Grade 4: Moderate to Difficult</td>
<td>Blue arrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Creek Walk</td>
<td>2km return</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>Grade 2: Easy</td>
<td>Red arrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Wall Return Walk</td>
<td>4.8 km return</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Grade 3: Moderate</td>
<td>Green arrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Springs Walk</td>
<td>2.5 km return</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>Grade 1: Easy</td>
<td>Sealed path no markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giles Track</td>
<td>22 km one way</td>
<td>Allow 2 days</td>
<td>Grade 4: Moderate to Difficult</td>
<td>Orange arrows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SHORT WALKS

**Kings Creek Walk:** The gentle slope of the unsealed track meanders up Kings Creek to a lookout point. This walk is suitable for families. Wheelchairs can access the first 700 metres.

**Kathleen Springs Walk:** This walk leads to a delightful spring-fed waterhole, suitable for families. Wheelchair accessible with assistance as the track has steep sloping sections.

LONGER WALKS

**Kings Canyon Rim Walk:** After an initial steep climb the walk offers spectacular views from the Canyon rim. Along the way are the weathered domes of the ‘Lost City’ and the lush vegetation of the ‘Garden of Eden’. This walk is suitable for fit, experienced walkers.

**South Wall Return Walk:** Starts with a steep climb up the southern rim of Kings Canyon and offers stunning views of the Park’s geological features. Suitable for fit, experienced walkers. Note access to the ‘Garden of Eden’ is not possible from this walk.

**Giles Track:** This 22 km (2 day) walk links Kings Canyon and Kathleen Springs. Careful planning and preparation is required. Visit the website for more details.

Guided Talks

Tap into local knowledge - Schedule a discussion into the visit! Park Rangers may be available to provide a short talk to your group, subject to Ranger availability. Contact the Watarrka Ranger Station on (08) 89567460.

Nearby locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park</td>
<td>Managed by Parks Australia this special place is a must see for visitors to the region. Visit <a href="http://www.parksaustralia.gov.au">www.parksaustralia.gov.au</a> for more information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park</td>
<td>This vast and spectacular section of the MacDonnell Ranges is an outstanding example of an ancient landscape sculptured over time by climatic elements. The Park stretches for 161 km west of Alice Springs, with many different visitor areas to explore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve</td>
<td>Established in 1872 the Telegraph Station is the original site of the first European settlement in Alice Springs. Visit the Historic Precinct*, head out on one of the mountain bike tracks or take the time to relax on the lawn for a barbecue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Entrance fees apply
ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE RIM WALK?

We have prepared this simple “check list” for you to review prior to starting the walk.

My Group is...

☐ Properly informed about walk difficulty and safety.

☐ Fit enough to complete the walk in a safe manner and have no preexisting medical conditions which may impact their abilities to complete the walk. (i.e. asthma, heart conditions, diabetes, recent ankle/knee/sport injuries).

☐ Hydrated and have eaten before commencing the walk (this includes a hearty breakfast). We also suggest taking a healthy snack along with you.

☐ Carrying sufficient water for the duration of the walk, we recommend 1 litre per person per hour of activity. In hotter weather also include hydration salts or electrolyte.

☐ Wearing sturdy footwear.

☐ Wearing clothing that protects the body from sun or provides insulation on cold days.

☐ Wearing a hat that protects face and neck from the sun.

☐ Properly informed about the impact and consequence of environmental damage and will not build rock cairns, graffiti rock surfaces or trees, break rocks open or litter.

As the coordinator I...

☐ Have read the safety induction handbook found at: www.nt.gov.au/parks-safety-induction

☐ Have read and understood the information contained in this document.

☐ Have adequately briefed all accompanying adults.

☐ Am carrying a first aid kit adequate for the group size.

☐ Am familiar with safety requirements on the Rim Walk.

☐ Am aware of the Emergency Response Procedure and location of Emergency Call Devices and First Aid Boxes on the walk.

☐ Have spare water.

☐ Have communication with other supervisors on the walk.

☐ Will ensure my students do not damage the environment by building rock cairns, graffiti rock surfaces or trees, break rocks open or litter.

☐ Am prepared to take all rubbish with us.

Please remember to be safe and respect the environment:

- Keep 2 metres away from cliff edge at all times
- Do not allow your group to lie down and peer over the edge
- Take all rubbish with you
- Bury human waste and remove toilet paper
Emergency Response Procedure for School Groups

Kings Canyon Rim Walk, Watarrka National Park

Before your Rim Walk please take time to ensure you are familiar with the location of the Emergency Call Devices (ECDs), first aid boxes and helipads. This could save a life.

**Teachers / Group leaders** will need to provide initial first aid to the casualty, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the rest of the group, until assistance arrives. Ranger response time will vary depending on their location within the National Park and your location on the walk. Be prepared for the response time to be an hour or more. Please be aware that locally based helicopters cannot fly after dark, therefore any evacuations would be via stretcher carry or postponed until first light when a safe evacuation can be made.

If Ranger assistance is required, please follow these procedures:

- After you have made sure that there is no danger to yourself or others, begin first aid as per your first aid training.

- Gather as much information as possible on the incident and the casualty. This will include: nature of the incident; casualty's name, date of birth, medical history and nationality; current medication, conscious level, breathing and whether they have travel insurance in case of the need for a helicopter.

- All of the track markers are numbered – take note of which is closest so the Rangers know exactly where you are.

- Send someone with these details to activate the nearest ECD. If in doubt as to whether to use the ECD, please always press it. Do not wait until it is too late! You should be carrying a map with ECD locations with you in your first aid kit for use in these situations.

- Do not move the casualty until directed by Ranger staff. You may make the casualty recovery more difficult if you move away from helipads or the place specified in the ECD call.

- If possible, make sure the casualty is shaded from the sun or insulated from the cold.

- Stay calm, take some deep breaths and utilise the people around you. Never leave the casualty alone.

**Emergency Call Devices:**

There are four ECDs located on the Rim Walk (refer to map overleaf). These are activated by removing the plastic cover and pressing the red button for four seconds, until the alarm sounds and then releasing it. The alarm will be received by the hand held radio of the Park Rangers. To talk to the Ranger, press and hold down the red button – to listen to the Ranger’s response, release the red button. The ECD will time out after 10 minutes if not being used, but can be reactivated by pressing the red button again.

The initial response from the Ranger will be:

“**You have reached the Watarrka Ranger Station, please state your name and the nature of your emergency.**”

- They will ask for the incident and casualty details you collected.

- Please remember to remain calm and relay information in a clear and concise manner.

- Follow the instructions given by Park Rangers.

- Park Rangers will notify Kings Canyon Medical Clinic, organise casualty retrieval as required and attend the scene as soon as possible.

- Continue to provide assistance to the casualty until stood down by Park Rangers.

**First Aid Boxes:**

There are four large metal first aid boxes located on the Rim Walk (refer to map overleaf). A small quantity of water and basic first aid supplies (including rehydration salts) are stored in the top of these boxes. These supplies are available to you or any visitor who may need them urgently. It is important that you let the Park Rangers know which items have been used, so they can be replaced as soon as possible. You can do this by phoning the Rangers or by activating one of the ECDs. Just be sure to state in your first response that it is not an emergency. Alternatively record on the paper provided in the box what was removed.