



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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One of the great advantages of living in Fillmore is its proximity to amazing recreational activities, many of which are state and national parks.

The original plan was to time this column with the 100th anniversary celebration of the National Park Service on August 25, but there are some important reasons to do it now, as the outdoor activities season approaches. It would not be good to pass up a great opportunity to see what our state has to offer.

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the National Park Service, which would be a new federal bureau in the Department of the Interior. It would be responsible for protecting the 35 national parks and monuments then managed by the department and any more yet to be established.

With Yellowstone being the first national park, established in 1872, our country now has 407 national parks covering some 84 million acres. One hundred other countries have also taken an example from this and created national parks or equivalent preserves bringing the grand total to 1200 parks around the world.

In conjunction with the centennial anniversary of the National Park Service, many of our government agencies are offering free fee days.

April 16-24, 2016: National Park Week – National Park Service

June 11, 2016: National Get Outdoors Day – forest service

August 25-28, 2016: National Park Service Birthday – park service

September 24, 2016: National Public Lands Day – BLM, park service, forest service and US Fish and



Wildlife Service

October 9, 2016: First Sunday of National Wildlife Refuge Week - USFWS

November 11, 2016: Veterans Day
BLM, NPS, USFS, USFWS (11th-13th)

Take advantage of these dates during the upcoming months.

Were you aware that within a 200-mile radius of Fillmore you can reach seven national parks, three national monuments and a national recreation area?!

National Parks:

Bryce Canyon – 127 miles

Zions – 164 miles

Capital Reef – 121 miles

Great Basin – 136

Canyonlands – 219 (I fudged a little on this one and the next one.)

Arches – 207

National monuments and recreation areas:

Grand Staircase – 134 miles

Cedar Breaks – 95 miles

Glen Canyon – 139 miles

State parks are also plentiful close-by and offer a wide variety of activities including the closest: Yuba Lake, Palisades, Fremont Indian and, of course, the Territorial Statehouse, with forty-three state parks dotting the state.

I asked Fred Hayes, Director of the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation, what his favorite was among the state parks. He said that was a hard thing to do, but ended up with the following comment:

“I have a real soft spot in my heart for the Territorial Statehouse State Park. As a very young Ranger,



Territorial was my first permanent assignment. In fact, Territorial Statehouse State Park is probably the reason I pursued park management as a career. I'll share a short story if you have time. As a young boy, my family took a trip to pick up an aunt from Dixie College (now Dixie State) in about 1968 or so. I was 8 or 9 years old. We stopped in Fillmore and made a visit to the museum. As is typical of a kid that age, I asked the man behind the counter a question. Probably a typical stupid little kid question. He couldn't answer my question, and I pretty much forgot about it as we toured the building. I never gave it another thought, but as we were walking away from the museum, east toward Main street, he came running out of the building carrying a big book and flagging us down. He had found the answer to my question and wanted to make sure he caught us before he left. I never forgot that experience and when the opportunity came to go to work at Territorial, I jumped at it.

"I'd worked seasonal for the Division of Parks and Recreation for several summers, but Territorial was my first "real" ranger job. I learned a lot there, and enjoyed my time. I had great experiences with the people I worked with, the people of Millard County, and the supernatural residents of the Territorial Statehouse."

With summer weather just around the corner, it's time to plan a great vacation close to home.