

Palo duro canyon – one of unique places around the world

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Palo Duro Canyon is found in Texas, close to the city of Amarillo. It is part of the Caprock escarpment that is a major physical feature in the area; the canyon holds the bragging rights of being the second largest canyon in the United States measuring an approximate length of 120 miles with an average width of around 6 miles. It dips down at about 820 feet with some places being as deep as 1000 feet.

History

Evidence of the first human settlement in and around the canyon dates back to 15000 years ago, where Native Americans made the area their home after being attracted by the clean waters of the Red River; the same river whose erosional activities are behind the formation of the canyon in the first place. The first time Europeans laid eyes on the canyon was in 1541, when some members of the Colorado Expedition visited the area. In 1852 the area was mapped for the first time by an American military team that was spearheaded by Captain Randolph Macy. The Native Indians were finally removed forcefully in 1874 in a bloody war that left many Indians dead, the survivors were sent to a reservation in Oklahoma. The state of Texas bought a section of the Canyon in 1934 and turned it into a park that is open to the public to the present day.

Description and Structure

The canyon is a feature that resulted from water and wind erosion. It is characterized by caves and hoodoos. It has stratified layers of rock that got exposed by the erosion, as well as rich sediments on the floor of the canyon that are periodically deposited and washed away by heavy rains. Standalone

rock outcrops that have withstood the forces of erosions are also a common feature with the most famous of them all being the Lighthouse Rock.

Tourism

Palo Duro canyon is more than just a scenic stretch of physical beauty; it is a treasure cove of history and many people visit the place just to relive some of that history. Having been a home to Native Americans as far back as 15000 years ago the Palo Duro has been a favorite site for archaeologists and history lovers who believe the place holds many secrets from the past. The deep canyon also provides adventure seekers from around the world with exhilarating experiences like bungee jumping, all thanks to its extreme depths. Since the canyon was turned into a public park by the state in 1934 it has been attracting both local and foreign tourists.

Threats

Like any other place on earth, the Palo Duro Canyon has its own dangers lurking around it. A fall into the deep canyon can turn fatal as it is 800 feet deep on average. Hikers and climbers are always advised to exercise caution. As is the norm with the state of Texas; the canyon, which is loved by campers, is full of dangerous animals like poisonous snakes and spiders. An encounter at night with these animals is very high and a bite from any of the poisonous reptiles of Texas can lead to death. People are always asked to follow the guides and avoid wandering off on their own.