



Geology Underfoot in Death Valley and Owens Valley

Robert P. Sharp

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Eastern California boasts the greatest dryland relief in the contiguous United States, between 14,499-foot Mount Whitney in the Sierra Nevada and minus-282-foot Badwater Basin in Death Valley. That relief offers a rich variety of environments--and spectacular geology. Through driving and walking tours, *Geology Underfoot in Death Valley and Owens Valley* provides an on-the-ground look at the processes sculpting the terrain in this land of extremes. Illustrated with photographs, maps, and diagrams, each geological vignette weaves the tale of a particular scene, feature, or relationship in the landscape. Some sketches ponder questions that have puzzled geologists: what formed the turtlebacks in the Black Mountains and how do stones mysteriously slide on desolate Racetrack Playa? Others spotlight the role of volcanoes and earthquakes as landscape artists: the superb lava columns of Devil's Postpile, the massive steam explosion at Ubehebe Crater, and fault scarps that shape a golf course's greens. Still others focus on less obvious but equally powerful geologic processes: boulders shattered by salt crystals and rocks blasted by windblown sand. Together, these snapshots introduce readers to eastern California's rich, dynamic geology.

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