

Extreme Sports

National Park – Base Jumping

This year for the first time, you will be able to practise the popular sport of base jumping in some national parks including Yosemite National Park and Black Canyon National Park. Base jumping in U.S. National Parks was illegal because the park **rangers** believed that it was too dangerous. This year, however, the U.S. National Parks has decided to allow some base jumping after negotiating with extreme-sports groups.

“They were jumping anyway, taking extreme risks. The fact that we were giving out fines did not make them stop. Our approach wasn’t working, so we decided to work with the jumpers to make them safer rather than working against them,” says Jill Deacon of the National Parks Service.

About the sport:

In regular parachuting, people jump out of a plane. In base jumping, people jump with a parachute from a high place that is fixed in one place. The word “base” comes from an acronym of places from which you can jump:

B = Building

A = antennae (or tower)

S = span (like a bridge or arch)

E = earth (cliff or rock face)

Rock climbing and base jumping:

There is a large demand for base jumping in national parks because of the **growing** number of people who rock-climb up the **cliffs** and mountains in the park. Instead of walking back down, the rock climbers prefer to base-jump to the parking lot.

*"When you take days climbing up a **huge** rock, it is an incredible feeling to see it **flash** past your eyes in a couple of seconds as you jump back down to the ground," one rock climber and base jumper said.*

*"I tried it once and now I am addicted!" another base jumper said.
"I want to go every weekend!"*

People who try this sport seem to love it. It is another new extreme sport to add to a growing list.

What to know before you jump:

- 1 You must be an experienced parachutist before you try to base-jump from any national park.
- 2 You must get a base-jumping permit from the National Park Service before you jump. The National Park Service will demand to see your identification and your Backcountry Parachutists (BP) membership card.
- 3 You are responsible for your own health and safety. The National Park Service is not responsible for any death or injuries that take place in the park as a result of rock-climbing and/or base-jumping activity.

Smart

Words

ranger = a member of a national-park staff

growing = increasing

cliff = a steep or overhanging rock face

huge = enormous

flash = to pass by very quickly