

Death Valley eager to celebrate the heat

By Jay Jones, Los Angeles Times

Record heat is drawing tourists to Death Valley at possibly the most uncomfortable time of the year, where they are snapping a photograph next to a thermometer or attempting to fry an egg without a stove.

Death Valley National Park has posted warnings to visitors on how to survive the heat. It wouldn't seem a great time to visit, but on the other hand, the national park has issued an open invitation for folks to come celebrate the 100th anniversary of the hottest-ever temperature on the planet.



Along Artist's Drive travelers are able to witness a natural palette of colors. Photo/LTN file

The thermometer soared to 134 degrees on July 10, 1913, at what's now the appropriately-named settlement of Furnace Creek.

The celebration will kick off at noon July 10. The Furnace Creek Visitor Center will host a series of discussions, led by meteorologists and rangers, on a variety of topics related to

the region's extreme climate.

At 1:50pm, Weather Underground historian Christopher Burt will explain how Death Valley recently snatched the temperature record previously claimed by El Azizia, Libya. Park Service employees will also discuss how they cope with life at the hottest place on Earth.

At 4pm, visitors can join park rangers for a ritual that's taken place every day since recordkeeping began in 1911: the reading of the official thermometer at the Furnace Creek weather station.

On Sunday, the temperature there peaked at 129 degrees. That set a record as the hottest June temperature ever recorded in the United States.

July and August are typically the hottest months in the Mojave Desert, according to the National Weather Service.

Death Valley's geography helps account for its scorching temperatures. A sign at the Furnace Creek Resort's golf course notes that its elevation is 214 feet below sea level.