

**ANSWER KEY****Exercise: 1**

**Instructions:** The City of Rocks encompasses 14,300 acres of land renowned for its scenic, geologic, and historic significance. It has been designated as a natural and historic national landmark and is under study by the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service. By doing this exercise, you will learn about the geology and history of this landmark. Use your knowledge and answer the following questions completely and accurately.

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1. What problem keeps this area from becoming included into the park system where it would be better protected?

The forest service, Bureau of Land Management, the State of Idaho, and private owners each own different parts of this area. This mixed ownership is what prevents it from having better protection and management.

2. Which tribes of Indians used to live in the Silent City of Rocks area?

Shoshone-Bannock tribes inhabited the City of Rocks area. They hunted buffalo and ate nuts from pinyon pine trees. As more and more non-native Americans came west, they were resented.

3. What famous trail passes through this area?

The California trail is the trail that passes through the Silent City of Rocks. This trail was established in 1843. The trail branches off the Oregon Trail and of course goes south and west to California.

4. What evidence shows that many people used to pass through the area?

The trail can still be seen from the air. Other evidence includes grooves worn in rocks by the wheels of the passing wagons. Names written in axle grease can still be seen on the rocks.

5. Why is the Silent City of Rocks in a basin?

The Silent City of Rocks is in the Cassia Batholith. The quartzite that covered this batholith eroded away exposing the granite, which eroded away faster. Because of this eroding of the rock, the silent City of Rocks is in a basin.

6. How do joints speed up erosion?

Jointing speeds up erosion by providing a “plumbing system” in which solutions can migrate into the outcrops and disintegrate the surface layers of granite. The fracture channels can make it possible for blocks of rock to separate.

7. What is responsible for all of the strange shapes of rock formations?

Weathering is what created the strange rock formations. Through a large amount of time, weathering can erode away rock. Weathering leaves rounded smooth, surfaces.