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White Peak Wonderland

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(Redirected from [Ratland](#))

White Peak Wonderland was an [amusement park](#) located near [Glendale, New Hampshire](#) that operated between 1999 and 2005. It is the second largest abandoned amusement park in the US, after [Geauga Lake](#). Development of the park started in 1993, but was plagued by delays. Park owner [Jacob Rothland](#) issued frequent statements promising White Peak's imminent opening, even as the official opening date kept being pushed forward. By the mid 1990s, local media had started to disparagingly refer to White Peak as "Ratland"^[1], a play on Rothland's name and the park's mascot Rodney Rodent.

White Peak finally opened to the public on May 20, 1999, though some of the park's rides did not open for several more months. The Maze Manor, a [haunted house](#) that Rothland had played up as one of the park's main attractions and supposedly the most expensive haunted house built up to that time, did not open at all during the 1999 season. In 2000 it was open for only three weeks before it had to be closed down for months of maintenance and repairs. Visitor numbers never reached expected goals, and by 2003 several rides and park areas were mothballed, including the Maze Manor.

White Peak Wonderland



Rodney Rodent, the park's mascot

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Location | Belknap County, New Hampshire, United States |
| Coordinates | 43.5557°N 71.3056°W﻿ / ﻿43.5557°N 71.3056°W﻿ / 43.5557; -71.3056 |
| Owner | WPW Company |
| Opened | May 20, 1999 |
| Closed | August 26, 2005 |

Incidents [\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [List of incidents at White Peak Wonderland](#)

White Peak acquired a reputation for incidents. During the six years it was operating there were eight deaths and 32 serious injuries due to accidents and malfunctioning rides.

Kidnapping hoax [\[edit\]](#)

On the morning of October 8, 2002, park personnel received a report that an unknown assailant had kidnapped several children from inside the Maze Manor. The park was immediately closed down, and a massive search undertaken. It was not until late in the evening that police, trying in vain to contact parents or guardians, could conclude that the children in question did not exist and that the entire thing was a hoax. The Maze Manor was nonetheless closed down for the remainder of the season.

Controversy and closure [edit]

At 11.00 AM on August 12, 2005, during an otherwise normal operating day, the park's speaker system broadcasted a message announcing that the Maze Manor was re-opened, and that all park visitors could enter free of charge. Guests who took up the offer found the Maze Manor barely operational, with many of the exhibits broken or still covered by tarps. Some ^[who?] later claimed to have seen Jacob Rothland running through the halls of the Maze Manor, trying to single-handedly fill the roles of the actors who would normally have played victims and monsters inside the haunted house. By 3.00 PM another message was broadcasted, claiming that the re-opening had been a un-authorized prank and that the Maze Manor remained closed.

The following day, White Peak's [board of directors](#) had Rothland removed from his position. This prompted Rothland to author an [open letter](#) which he sent out to several news outlets. In the long, rambling letter, Rothland refers to himself as "a loyal servant of the amethyst city" and to the members of the board as "agents of evil", "hell-hounds" and "foul hobos", among other things. He also describes at length the wants and wishes of Rodney Rodent, as if the mascot was a living person. National media soon turned its attention to Rothland's bizarre behaviour and White Peak's troubled history ^[2]. Amidst a slew of negative publicity and disastrous visitor numbers, the park closed prematurely on August 26. White Peak was scheduled to open again for the 2006 season on May 3. However, this did not happen, and by July 2006 it was clear that the park would remain closed for the foreseeable future.

In 2010, [Six Flags](#) announced interest in purchasing White Peak Wonderland, with a possible goal of restoring the park. However, as of July 2015, nothing has come of it.

See also [edit]

- [List of defunct amusement parks](#)

References [edit]

- ↑ McQuaid, Joseph (1996-03-30). "Ratland!" . *New Hampshire Union Leader*.
- ↑ Wright, James (2005-08-15). "The Mad-Man of Ratland" . *New Hampshire Business Review*.

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