Chiricahua National Monument
Long-Range Interpretive Plan

April 2012
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Interpretive Planning

Fort Bowie National Historic Site

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The Planning Process

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan outlines recommendations for future interpretive services, facilities, and media. Park staff, partners, tribal representatives, and stakeholders worked together to develop a comprehensive tool that will outline educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to develop intellectual and emotional connections to the natural and cultural resources found within Chiricahua National Monument. Our goal is to promote Chiricahua National Monument’s resource values through specially planned visitor experiences and excellence in interpretation.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) recommends actions that should occur over the next seven to ten years. It identifies park themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide variety of personal and non-personal interpretive services and outreach activities that will best communicate the park purpose, significance and themes. This planning process has been customized to meet the needs for Chiricahua National Monument, as well as the conditions and special circumstances that exist there. The ultimate product is a cost-effective, tightly focused, high quality park interpretive program that achieves management goals, provides appropriate visitor opportunities, and facilitates desired visitor experiences.

This plan was developed simultaneously with one for Fort Bowie National Historic Site. A scoping trip for both was conducted in November, 2010. Foundation workshops were held in March, 2011, and Recommendation workshops were held in October, 2011.
Approach to Tribal Input

Early in the process, the park interpretive staff expressed a desire to more fully and accurately represent the stories and voice of the Apache people in interpretation at both Fort Bowie and Chiricahua. They also communicated a wish to establish a direction for interpretive programs and media that reflects multiple perspectives on the history, significance, and meanings of the parks.

As a response to this goal, the planning team undertook an innovative approach to elicit feedback from Apache tribal representatives. Rather than planning a traditional several-day “sit-down” planning workshop involving both local stakeholders and Apache representatives, a format that tends to inhibit tribal attendance and participation, a two-day workshop specifically with Apache representatives was held on site at the parks. The morning of the first day was spent at Fort Bowie NHS, walking the site with the Apache representatives and asking them to reflect on their tribe’s history and on current interpretation about the fort. Following informal discussion over lunch, the group talked specifically about the park’s significance and interpretive themes. The second day followed this same structure for foundations planning at Chiricahua National Monument. Workshop participants are listed in Appendix 1.

Barring legislative changes or major new revelations, the foundational elements expressed in this LRIP – purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals – will remain constant over the life of the plan. Specific recommendations about media and programs may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design and planning documents must be produced to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.
Site Background

Chiricahua National Monument is nestled in a peaceful sky island in southeastern Arizona. Its slopes are textured by what the Chiricahua Apache called “standing up rocks” — the result of powerful volcanic events combined with geologic erosive forces over time. Hundreds of these rhyolitic rock formations occur in the monument—surprising and delighting visitors while inspiring respect for the powerful forces of nature.

It is these geologic features that have earned Chiricahua a designation among our nation’s most treasured places. Through the hard-fought efforts of some of its earliest ranching families, the area was made a National Monument in 1924. It is the stories of these families as well as those of Chiricahua as a cultural homeland to the Chiricahua Apache, a loved homestead, a CCC work site, and a guest ranch—that visitors to this remote oasis can relate to on a human scale.

Location and Access

The park is located 120 miles southeast of Tucson, AZ. The nearest town is Willcox, AZ, about 40 miles away via Arizona State Highways 181 and 186. There is one park entrance and one road that runs through the monument and terminates at Massai Point.

The park and its amenities are open to visitors in all seasons. The historic Faraway Ranch buildings are open to visitors for twice-daily tours in spring and, depending on staffing levels, in winter, summer, and fall. The park is jointly managed with Fort Bowie National Historic Site and Coronado National Memorial.

Human History

Human presence in the Chiricahua Mountains extends back to the Paleo Indians, and encompasses multiple cultures that used and traveled to this place before the arrival of Euro-Americans in the late 1800s. This area was a meeting point and camp for several bands of the Chiricahua Apache, a culture of indigenous people who traveled over vast areas for hunting and gathering. Today, some tribal descendants of the Chiricahua Apache are part of the White Mountain or Mescalero bands of Apache in New Mexico. Others live on and off reservations in Oklahoma and still others reside in towns and cities throughout the United States. Generations after being displaced, the Apache feel a deep spiritual connection to this area that was once a treasured part of their homeland.

The Stafford family was the first European American family to homestead in the area in 1880. They were joined eight years later by the Ericksons and their children, who built Faraway ranch and later transformed the property into a guest ranch that operated until 1970.
Chiricahua National Monument
In the 1930’s the Civilian Conservation Corps established camp NM-2-A at Chiricahua NM. The men were responsible for developing the majority of the staff and visitor facilities that are still in use today. They improved the scenic drive, constructed miles of hiking trails, and built most of the monument structures including the original park headquarters, Sugarloaf Mountain fire lookout, Massai Point exhibit building, maintenance facilities, campground, and staff housing. Evidence of their camp is seen today along the Silver Spur Meadow Trail.

Today, Chiricahua draws visitors to its hiking trails on foot or by horse to enjoy solitude and to marvel at the sheer number and variety of gravity-defying geologic formations. Researchers and nature-lovers are drawn to the plants, wildlife, and tranquility of the ecosystems. Overnight guests at the campground enjoy the monument’s natural dark skies, untainted by light pollution. Visitors often discover what generations and cultures before them have known—that they are in a unique and very special place.

**Fire Ecology**

During the summer of 2011, the Horseshoe Two fire engulfed the park. While periodic forest fires are an important part of the natural ecology in the arid West, more than a hundred years of fire suppression efforts have created an imbalance. As a result, rather than sweeping quickly through the forest floor, leaving mature trees relatively unharmed, today’s forest fires—due to built-up fuel loads and overly dense forests—burn hotter and longer, spreading to and killing the trees of the forest canopy. Both situations occurred in the recent fire at Chiricahua leaving a “checkerboard” of living and dead areas of forest. The result, where forests have been heavily damaged, will be some dramatically altered areas in the park. In the long run, returning to a more normal fire cycle is healthy for park ecosystems as a patchwork of forests of differing ages supports greater diversity of plants and animals.

Educating the public about the fires that have occurred and the importance of fires as part of a healthy ecosystem will be an important park interpretive effort over the next several years.
Park Purpose

Participants at the Foundations Workshop reviewed and refined the following Purpose Statements derived from the Final Environmental Impact Statement/General Management Plan (pages 3-4)

Chiricahua National Monument was established and is managed in order to:

• Preserve and protect all geological, biological, and cultural resources and values;
• Provide recreational opportunities for diverse groups that are compatible with the preservation, protection, and appreciation of park resources;
• Provide educational and research opportunities to foster understanding and appreciation of the natural and human history of the area;
• Provide opportunities for visitors and affiliated peoples to connect in their own ways to meanings inherent in the resources.

Park Significances

As part of the Foundations Workshop, the park’s Significance Statements were refined from the 2001 General Management Plan to reflect the most current understanding of the resources at Chiricahua National Monument (NM).

• Chiricahua National Monument is a dramatic example of how a volcanic eruption and natural processes create unique rhyolitic rock formations.
• Chiricahua NM, part of the Madrean Sky Island complex, contains exceptional biodiversity due to its location at a rare intersection of four major biomes (Sierra Madre, Rocky Mountain, Chihuahua Desert, Sonora Desert).
• Chiricahua NM provides for easily-reached wilderness experiences that include Class I air quality, natural soundscapes relatively free of human noise, and one of the darkest night skies in the continental United States.
• Chiricahua NM preserves in a relatively small area the integrity and evidence of a continuous human history that spans thousands of years, encompassing prehistoric indigenous peoples, Chiricahua Apache, Buffalo Soldiers, settlers and ranchers, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and early 20th century tourism.
• Fire is a significant part of the ecosystem and is a continuing process in this landscape. In 2011, massive forest fires spread through the eastern part of the state making it the worst year for fires in Arizona’s history.
Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are based on the park’s purpose and resource significance statements. Primary interpretive themes are those ideas and concepts that the park hopes every visitor will have an opportunity to understand. They provide the foundation for all interpretive media and programs in the park. The themes do not include everything that may be interpreted, but they do address ideas that are critical to an understanding and appreciation of the park’s importance. All interpretive efforts should relate to one or more of the themes, and each theme should be addressed by some part of the overall interpretive program.

As part of the Foundations and Recommendations Workshops, the park’s Interpretive Themes were refined from the 2001 General Management Plan to reflect the most current understanding of the resources at Chiricahua National Monument.

1 Geology
The dramatic beauty and quiet mystery of Chiricahua NM belies the violent volcanic deposition of white-hot ash that laid the foundation for a geologic work-in-progress.

2 Biodiversity
Chiricahua NM provides visitors and researchers opportunities to explore and study richly diverse plant and animal life where biological processes continue relatively unaffected by human influence.

3 Wilderness Values
The remoteness of Chiricahua NM provides for contemplation and imagination through solitude, exploration, and discovery of the natural world—away from the distractions of contemporary life.

4 Human History
Stories of struggle, perseverance, stewardship, and connection to the land unite the experiences of the prehistoric indigenous peoples, the Chiricahua Apache, the Buffalo Soldiers, the workers of the CCC camps, and the early settlers here. All left a lasting legacy and were in turn transformed by their experiences.

5 Fire Ecology
Fire has always been a part of this place. It brings dramatic change that revitalizes, regenerates, and promotes the health of the landscape.
Management Goals

This LRIP section serves to establish important guidelines and sideboards for the future operation of the interpretation & education program. It addresses the park’s purpose, the mission of Interpretation and Education, and management expectations for the interpretation & education program.

Program components

Informational Services
Informational services create an environment in which enjoyment and appreciation of heritage can be enhanced for the visitor. These services include information regarding visitor orientation and visitor safety, resource preservation, and public relations.

Interpretive Services
Interpretive services rely on the format of story to provide opportunities for people to connect to heritage resources. In this way, a park’s interpretive services enhance visitor enjoyment and appreciation of heritage.

Educational Services
Educational services create deep connections between audiences and the park through education. These services include teaching, support of scientific research, stimulating inquiry, and providing the tools educators need to communicate park themes to students.

Management Goals

Audience Engagement and Stewardship
- Establish a sense of ownership and stewardship by park audiences for Chiricahua National Monument.
- Help park audiences relate Chiricahua National Monument to the National Park System as a whole.

- Provide meaningful and memorable experiences for park audiences.
- Engage local community members of all cultural and racial backgrounds to enjoy, benefit from, and care for park resources; ensure that Chiricahua National Monument is an active and engaged part of surrounding local communities.
- Provide opportunities to re-engage children and youth in outdoor recreational experiences, encouraging physical activity, a sense of place and love of nature.

Education and Interpretation
- Provide educational opportunities for park audiences using the rich cultural and natural resources and stories associated with Chiricahua National Monument.
- Interpret multiple points of view about the many stories and meanings associated with Chiricahua National Monument in a balanced and culturally competent manner, fostering cross-cultural appreciation for heritage.
- Help audiences find contemporary meanings in park stories.
- Relate present day park preservation concerns to broader issues such as climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and other critical issues; and help audiences understand that resource preservation reaches beyond the park boundaries.

These things, along with the activities of other individuals and organizations, will help contribute to a National Park System that is preserved for future generations.
Audience Experience Goals

*Audience Experience Goals describe desired experiences that stakeholders think the managers of the program should pay special attention to as the park’s Interpretation and Education program is planned and implemented.*

The following lists articulate the goals that the implementation of this plan will help to achieve for audiences to the park. The statements describe the goals, but not specific actions to achieve them.

**In Advance of their Visit**
Visitors will have the opportunity to:

- choose their personal experience.
- access up-to-date, changing information.
- have questions answered relating to orientation, safety, and trip planning.
- understand environmental and safety requirements to explore the area.
- be aware of park significance and receive park and NPS brand messaging.

**At Arrival**
Visitors will have the opportunity to:

- feel welcomed, be comfortable, use a restroom, have space to relax and “gear up.”
- have the opportunity to document their arrival.
- know where to pay their park fee.
- receive orientation, safety, and trip planning information through interaction with park staff or signage.
- buy a park pass.
- receive interpretive safety messages related to the backcountry.
- learn about the locations of other needed facilities.
- view the landmarks that have been seen on a map and in pictures.

**During their Visit**
Visitors will have the opportunity to:

- have access to field guides, maps and interpretive information on park themes to enhance their experience.
- learn about the park’s significance.
- experience interpretive information related to park themes.
- make personal connections between interpretive messages and the resource.
- talk to park staff and have in-depth conversation upon arrival and in the resource if they encounter park staff.
- find solace and solitude, have a safe wilderness experience.
- where possible, have an similar experience if they are physically challenged.
- understand cultural resource preservation and its importance.
- have access to ranger-led programs and non-personal interpretive media.
- feel inspired and renewed by connecting with history and nature.
- feel welcome to share their park experiences with staff and other visitors.
- be aware of volunteer and employment opportunities at this and other National Park sites.
- have access to appropriate books and souvenirs reinforcing Chiricahua’s interpretive themes.
- form a stronger connection to the resource that leads to stewardship.
- establish new traditions, plan for a future visit.
Park Audiences

Understanding current and potential audiences can help the park plan interpretive programs that most effectively enhance the experiences of its visitors. When comprehensively planning an interpretation & education program, the basis for categorizing audiences lies in whether or not a particular audience requires communication in a way distinct from that of the general park audience. The park must strike a balance between communicating effectively to a greater number of specific audiences, and the limited resources available to the park’s programs.

A Visitor Use Survey was conducted in the spring of 2011 for Chiricahua National Monument.

Visitors to the park can be divided into the following general groups:

- **Adult Groups:** Hikers, families, college groups on spring break, and winter retirees traveling throughout southern Arizona.

  The visitor use survey reports that 60% of visitor groups consisted of two-person groups, while 23% were in groups of four or more.

- **Incidental Visitors:** Passers-by come across the monument in all seasons of the year. They typically enjoy the scenic drive, camp, do short hikes, and tour Faraway Ranch.

- **International Visitors:** Primarily seen in the spring and summer, this group is composed of mainly Europeans who come to camp, hike and see the American southwest.

  The visitor survey reported that U.S. visitors comprised 85% of total visitation to the park during the survey period. Twenty-six percent of U.S. visitors came from Arizona. Only 2% of visitors reported that they would appreciate multilingual park interpretive materials, and Spanish was not listed as a requested language.

- **Local Residents:** This year round visitor demographic often brings family and friends visiting from out of town. They enjoy the park orientation film, views from Massai Point, and Faraway Ranch tours.

- **Recreational Visitors:** Hikers and campers come to the monument all year round, although summer is the slowest season.

- **School Groups:** In spring and autumn, local schoolchildren come to experience the unique geology, ecology, and history at the monument.

- **Subject Matter Enthusiasts:** Birders, Geologists, Photographers, and other special-interest visitors come to the monument in all seasons.

- **Virtual Visitors:** Looking for a possible destination or to plan their trip, virtual visitors of all types “enter” the monument through the website.
Issues and Influences Affecting Interpretation

No program operates in a vacuum. A number of issues related to the park should be taken into account when planning and implementing the park’s overall interpretive program. This section lists these issues; solutions and strategies are addressed in the recommendations section of this report.

• Chiricahua National Monument, Fort Bowie National Historic Site, and Coronado National Memorial are jointly managed parks, sharing management at both the superintendent and chief levels.

• Developments adjacent to park boundaries is a consideration. There is the potential of neighboring lands to move from ranches to housing development over the next ten years. While this is a long-term issue, Chiricahua must consider viewsheds and the visitor experience, working with governments, local partners, and any development teams to ensure that the quality of experience at the monument is retained despite changes in surrounding land use.

• There is a possible boundary expansion at Chiricahua. This will add complexity to the job of resource managers and require a new look at the visitor experience.

• Challenges with funding and transportation prevent many school programs from coming to Chiricahua. The monument can respond to this issue with digital and web-based media that bring the park to schools instead. Outreach opportunities, where feasible, should be investigated.

• Border issues are critical for this near-international border monument. Park management continues to monitor this situation as these issues can place some limits on interpretive programming.

• A rehabilitation of exhibits and interior remodel of the visitor center at Chiricahua had been initiated at the time of this plan, although it has been placed on hold.

• Group programs are difficult because visitors to Chiricahua typically come as individuals and not as part of larger groups. Recommendations should address the need to interact with visitors on an individual level or find successful ways to assemble small groups into larger program offerings.

• NPS Interpretation and Education Renaissance
  The National Park Service National Education Council has created a nationwide movement to enhance and equip its interpretation and education programs to meet the needs of 21st century audiences. The Renaissance has five areas of focus which are relevant to Interpretation and Education at Chiricahua National Monument:

  a. Establishment of National Standards for Interpretation and Education.

  b. Engaging new and diverse audiences. The demographics of the American population are changing drastically. It is important that national park audiences reflect the face of a richly diverse nation. Everyone must feel welcome
at national parks and have opportunities to see aspects of their own background and experience reflected in the universal meanings and stories interpreted at national parks.

c. New Technology. Changing technology is profoundly impacting the way people communicate, learn, find community, express themselves, find and process information. To fully engage a modern audience, national parks must use new media and current technologies to interpret park resources without abandoning traditional methods and techniques. Currently there is no cell phone service at the park and this will inhibit real-time transfer of information to visitors via their own handheld devices while in the park.

d. Embrace Partners. It is clear that with ever-growing audiences, and ever-dwindling budgets and personnel, the only way to meet increasing demands and fully serve park audiences is to work closely with existing partners and continue to identify new partnership opportunities.

e. Evaluation. Traditionally in the NPS, interpretation and education programs have not had access to the solid research and evaluative data needed to make decisions on what programs to offer and how to best allocate funding, personnel, and other critical resources. In this time of scarce resources, it is important to make decisions based on what approaches are effective and what audiences respond to. To accomplish this, managers should consider the goals and outcomes of its programs using evaluation. Chiricahua National Monument can also learn from evaluative and research data produced throughout the park service system and the interpretive field in general.

Foundation for Planning

The fireplace is all that remains of a former CCC camp at Chiricahua.
Existing Conditions
Pre-Visit and Arrival Information

Media Outreach
AZ 511 system: This service is managed by the Arizona Department of Transportation to provide current road, special event, and tourism information for participating sites throughout Arizona.

Personal Services
Current services include Faraway Ranch house tours, interpretive talks, walks, and campground evening programs during the busy season, and informal roving interpretation at scenic overlooks or along the trails.

Signs
Waysides are scattered throughout the park at scenic overlooks/trailheads and at Faraway Ranch.

Website and Social Media
Chiricahua maintains a Facebook site. Pages and sub-pages of the park website include:

- Home:
  Welcome message, park highlights: camping, hiking, Faraway Ranch Historic District, Sky Islands, Weather, Contact Information

- Plan Your Visits:
  Directions, Operating Hours, Seasons and Fees, Safety, Things to Know Before You Come, Things To Do

- Photos/Multimedia:
  Photo Gallery, Ranger Minute Podcast

- Nature & Science:
  Animals, Plants, Environmental Factors, Natural Features and Ecosystems

- News:
  Press Releases

- Management:
  Partners, Park Planning- General Management Plan, Park Statistics, Laws & Policies

- Support:
  Bookstore

Visitor Facilities

Park Road/ Bonita Canyon Scenic Drive
The park’s 8-mile, paved, scenic drive was originally constructed in the 1920s and later improved by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. Beginning in the lower canyon grasslands at the entrance station, it travels through the monument and terminates at Massai Point with stunning views of the canyons and rock formations.

Entrance Station and Cemetery
The park entrance station is the first opportunity visitors have to interact with park staff. It is staffed daily during the busy season, February through May, and usually three to four days a week during the slow season.

Beyond the entrance station is a small cemetery with two iron-fenced gravesites. One is for Luis Prue, an early rancher of the area. The other is for members of the Erickson family—Neil, Emma, their daughter, Hildegard and their son, Ben. The Ericksons were one of the first settlers in Bonita Canyon and developed
Faraway Ranch. This cemetery is the first interpretive opportunity visitors encounter upon entering the park.

**Visitor Center**
The visitor center is a combination of two structures. The original portion of the building was constructed by the CCC in the 1930s and is now staff offices. An addition was constructed in the 1960s as part of the NPS Mission 66 program and is now the public portion of the building.

**Picnic Areas**
Bonita Creek picnic area features picnic tables, bathrooms, and large, shady trees. The park has plans to make the area ADA compliant. Shade ramadas are planned for the other two picnic areas in the park, Massai Point and Faraway Ranch, but they are not needed at Bonita Creek due to the large evergreen shade trees that protect the site from sun exposure. There is also limited picnicking at the visitor center, Sugarloaf Mountain, and Echo Canyon parking areas.

**Faraway Ranch Area**
This historic ranch home, outbuildings, and grounds are a popular destination for visitors. Interpretive staff offers tours of the interior of the house twice daily in the high season. The tours last 30 to 45 minutes. Interpretation is a bit of a challenge because the interior of the house represents different eras—the kitchen and parts of the house were remodeled in the 1960s but the exterior is more of an authentic ranch house. The house was used as a guest ranch until 1970 and numerous family items remain inside the house. The house’s interior is staged with authentic-looking vignettes from the guest ranch period.

A cultural landscape plan is being created to determine the type of interpretation at this site.

The original portion of the visitor center was constructed by the CCC in the 1930s and is now staff offices.
In the guest dining room, the fireplace features stones carved by the Buffalo Soldiers stationed in Bonita Canyon during the winter of 1885-1886. During this time, they created a monument to honor President James A. Garfield. However, by the 1920s the monument was found to be degrading outdoors. Ed Riggs chose to use the stones for the fireplace in this enclosed space to protect the historical stones.

With the exception of the upper floor, the house is wheelchair accessible. However, the grounds and trails in the historic district are often challenging for wheelchair-bound visitors due to the uneven and rocky terrain.

**Massai Point Area**
A number of waysides are scattered around the area and there are 13 more along the interpretive nature trail that circles Massai Point. An 8-sided exhibit building constructed by the CCC is located at the end of a paved walkway from the parking lot. The interior of the building is not accessible to wheelchairs because of both a step at the doorframe and the door’s narrow width.

Inside the building, newer exhibit panels are located underneath each window. Each of these is attached with Velcro to a case below that holds older, intact, exhibit displays. The exhibits hidden below the graphic panels feature objects and journal-style entries and sketches from the perspective of a geologist exploring the park. Despite their age, they are in good condition and are attractive.

A hiker’s shuttle travels between the visitor center and the Massai Point or Echo Canyon Trailheads once a day. On this 15 minute ride, there is currently no official interpretive program, although drivers do informally converse with visitors.

**Campground**
The 25-site Bonita Canyon Campground is available to use on a first come, first served basis for tent campers, trailers, and recreational vehicles less than 30 feet in length. There are three sites with hook-ups for volunteer use and an accessible site with electric hook-ups for people who are physically challenged. There is a restroom building with flush toilets and cold water sinks. Evening programs are presented at the amphitheater as staffing permits during the busy spring season.

**Interpretive Media**

**Park Film**
The park film was produced by Harpers Ferry Center in 1996. A seating area in a corner of the visitor center provides a viewing area. The late American film actor, singer and songwriter, Rex Allen Sr. (known as the Arizona Cowboy and for his narration of many Disney and Western movies), narrates the short film.

**Exhibits**
Exhibits in the building are fairly outdated. A design/build contract for new exhibits was in place in 2010 with the Arizona State Museum in association with the University of Arizona. At this writing this exhibit project is neither active nor funded.

Exhibit cases inside the museum/visitor center space are the originals from the 1960s, and classified by SHPO as part of the Mission 66 historic fabric. There are also newer, non-historic exhibit cases highlighting the CCC and Faraway Ranch.

Taxidermy animal mounts are displayed throughout the exhibits. The National Park Service is attempting to phase out the use of taxidermy because of maintenance and other issues—in a new exhibit scheme, these elements should not be retained.
A touchscreen “electronic ranger” was recently installed in the visitor center to replace an outdated computer station. Content for this interactive program is a combination of safety messages, weather information, trip planning, park resources including natural history (geology, wildlife, plants), and cultural history sections. Programming was developed by US Media Services in Denver with special attention to ensure the device is ADA compliant.

**Publications**

Park-specific publications are produced by the Western National Parks Association. These include the Chiricahua and Faraway Ranch General Information Publication, and a walking guide to the Bonita Canyon Historic District.

**Wayside Exhibits**

There are wayside exhibits throughout the public areas of the park including interpretive trails, on the park road, and at Massai Point.

**Media Assets**

**Artifact Collection**

The park’s artifacts that are not currently displayed have been moved to the Western Archeological Conservation Center (WACC) in Tucson. The park’s artifact collection also includes the artifacts from and within the Faraway Ranch House. Chiricahua NM also has a plant herbarium housed at the University of Arizona.

**Photo and Media Archives**

These resources are both limited and unorganized and many items are currently located at WACC. Chiricahua has an extensive slide collection that needs to be scanned.

**Park Library**

Chiricahua has a limited library with a variety of books, videos, and other publications relating to park or area resources, available for staff use.

**Personal Services**

Ranger Programs, Talks and Roves

Chiricahua interpretive staff present weekend evening programs in March and April as well as guided hikes, talks, and off-site presentations in various surrounding communities. About fifteen school groups come to the park each year. The interpretation provided is general and not curriculum-based.

**Special Events and Outreach**

The parks are involved in community events including Wings Over Willcox, Tucson Bookfest, Fiesta at Tumacacori, and Southwest Wings Birding Festival.

**Curriculum-Based Education Program**

There is no curriculum-based education program currently in place at Chiricahua. School groups come for ranger-led hikes but there is minimal advanced planning and/or coordination and programs are currently not curriculum-based. College groups come to study the unique geology and ecology of Chiricahua.
Staffing
Staff consists of one permanent GS-9 interpreter, one GS-5 STEP, plus one GS-12 Chief of Interpretation (vacant at this writing).

Partnerships

Cooperating Association
Western National Parks Association (WNPA) based in Tucson maintains the bookstores for the park and provides park funding via the Interpretive Support Account.

Apache Nations
Affiliated tribal nations include: Mescalero, Chiricahua at Fort Sill, White Mountain, and San Carlos Apache.

Volunteer Program
Chiricahua has a need for more volunteers but is limited to those that can live on-site since the park is located at least 35 miles from local communities. The park has some returning volunteers but is interested in recruiting new participants.

At Chiricahua, vehicles longer than 29 ft. cannot enter the campground so volunteers who live in larger RVs cannot be housed there. The availability of shared housing in the seasonal staff housing area can be unpredictable.

Outside Partnerships
There is no official friends group for Chiricahua. Many local community organizations, chambers of commerce, and tourism outlets actively promote and support the park.

Partners and Potential Partners
- Park neighbors
- Employee families
- Volunteers
- Donors/subscribers
- Tourism offices and publications
- Bed & Breakfast operations
- Local birding festivals such as Wings Over Willcox
- WNPA
- Retired employees
- University of Arizona
- Sonora Desert Museum
- Arizona Range News (Willcox paper)
- Tucson channel 4 news
- Other local parks: Coronado NM, Saguaro NP, Fort Bowie NHS
- Conservation groups such as Sky Island Alliance
- Other parks with subject matter-similarities (geology, sky islands)
- Valley Telephone
Recommendations
Interpretive planning assesses current conditions and formulates recommendations that will provide direction and focus to achieve the desired future interpretive program. A long-range interpretive plan analyzes all needs and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, facilities, programs, and opportunities for partnerships to communicate in the most efficient and effective way the park’s purpose and significance.

Goals for Interpretive Programming

These goals are designed to realize the vision, objectives, themes, and visitor experiences described in the Foundation for Planning section. The following principles will apply to all interpretation at Chiricahua National Monument:

- All interpretation will address physical and programmatic accessibility.
- Where possible, interpretation will use reproduction objects and documented personal stories to bring the story alive for visitors.
- Where possible, the park will build on existing partnerships to develop programs, media, and special events.
- The park will follow the standards of the National Park Service Graphic Identity Program as signs and interpretive media are upgraded.
- Interpretation will include examples and perspectives from diverse points of view.
- “Virtual visitors” will have opportunities to view key park vistas and access new research, studies, management plans, and information.
- The park will strive to create experiences for new audiences.

Introduction

Interpretive planning assesses current conditions and formulates recommendations that will provide direction and focus to guide the future interpretive program. These suggestions should provide a framework for the park’s strategic vision but should not limit the creativity and scope that is essential when planning specific programs and media. These recommendations contain both long-term and short-term strategies that may be very helpful when preparing the annual implementation plan and related funding requests.

Chiricahua National Monument’s interpretation and education program operates within a stunningly beautiful yet extremely remote destination. Chiricahua provides both developed areas and trails allowing visitors to view a relatively untouched landscape, dark night skies, and historical landscapes. The challenge for staff here is to connect more visitors to its interpretive messages without infringing on the natural beauty of the site. This plan recommends ways that the interpretive team can maintain a sense of discovery and adventure in viewing wilderness areas while enriching the visitor experience with a greater depth of learning and exposure to concepts that might not be evident on the surface.
The monument also features a historic district that allows visitors to connect to the pioneer settlers, Civilian Conservation Corps, Buffalo Soldiers, and ranchers who made this place a home. This plan recommends that Chiricahua’s interpretive team use a variety of media to focus on this area, as well as the visitor center, as places to interpretively bring history to life for visitors.

Finally, this plan makes a concerted effort to incorporate stories of the Chiricahua Apache, a group that left little physical evidence of their presence at the monument, but maintains a strong spiritual tie through their descendants.

Creating opportunities for visitors to understand these connections to the Chiricahua Mountains and see the landscape from another perspective should be an important goal. Adding this important layer of history into the story of the monument will greatly enrich it. Ongoing communication with the descendants of the Chiricahua Apache will be an important element in the success of these efforts.
Recommendations

Pre-Visit Orientation

General and trip-planning information will continue to be provided by traditional means such as regular mail, phone, email, and website. All mailed information should have the park website address so that visitors can easily access more in-depth information online.

Online Orientation

The park website was highlighted by park staff as an area in need of improvement. Interpretive components of the website will be discussed in the Website and Social Media section of this report while website orientation and wayfinding needs are addressed below.

The orientation and trip planning components of the site could be improved by adding:

- More safety information about the hikes, either incorporated into the trail guide or in a matrix format directly on the site. This includes amount of food and water needed, up-to-date trail conditions, information about heatstroke, terrain and climate, wildlife, and what facilities are located along the trail. The park should consider adding a link to the park map directly from the Things to Do page, or possibly making a distinct section for hiking.

- Current weather conditions via a weather station and/or webcam.

- A virtual ranger portal on the site that allows visitors to ask questions and get responses in real time (when possible).

- Add a statement urging visitors to leave in place any cultural objects that they find in the park.

Park Radio Station

The drive to Chiricahua is long and can be uneventful, providing a captive audience for a park radio station. This station could provide safety, weather, and orientation information to approaching vehicles as well as brief interpretive content focusing on sky islands or scenery visible on the drive. Chiricahua would need to investigate signal distance, maintenance needs, and potential partner stations when developing this interpretive and informative feature.

Overall Park Experience and Wayfinding

Entry Station

There is a small entry station at the entrance to the park. Because there is greater need for staff at the visitor center and other areas of the park, it is not always staffed and the building remains closed. The park might consider a semi-permanent, more welcoming, informational, and attractive sign indicating to visitors that they should proceed to the visitor center.

Infrastructure throughout the park

The quality of the visitor experience is impacted by visitors’ ability to navigate the park easily, find necessary facilities, and plan for their time at the park. Current park signage is mostly in the traditional routed-wood style which is appropriately low-profile and familiar from other National Park Service sites. Because the park is fairly easy to navigate along a central road, the park is encouraged to continue use of this rustic signage. To improve the overall visitor experience, the planning team expressed the following recommendations.

- Assess driver and pedestrian safety surrounding the locations of interpretive waysides and viewing areas. Ensure that adequate advance signage is visible to drivers and
that warning signs, parking, and speedbumps/striping exist in areas where pedestrians are likely to be outside their vehicles.

- Add recycling stations. The park should provide recycling bins for glass, cans, bottles, and mixed paper at most, if not all locations that there is currently a waste receptacle. The park is encouraged to label garbage cans as destined for the landfill.

- Where solar panels are added on roofs to generate energy, ensure that these green energy improvements are interpreted for visitors.

**Digital Media**

Enabling handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets to push interpretive content could allow visitors to access these messages at their own pace during a visit. In particular, the historic district would benefit from visitors’ ability to receive interpretive messages through handheld devices while exploring the area. The park should, however, remain cognizant of visitors’ desire to unplug and imagine the pace of life in an earlier time, or enjoy natural land- and soundscapes when they visit national parks. Digital media that can be carried into these experiences should be offered judiciously throughout the historic district and the other areas of the park. There is also the potential for using this media offsite, giving those visitors who may never get the chance to visit the park the opportunity to experience it. Suggestions discussed include the following:

- Add Wi-fi access to areas of the park to enable downloading, e-tours, and access to the park website during a visit.

- Develop a comprehensive map and guide that can be downloaded to a phone or tablet, incorporating audio, video, interactive maps, layered information, and using a virtual ranger as a tour guide.

- Use augmented reality — a live, direct or indirect view of a physical, real-world environment whose elements are augmented by computer-generated sensory input such as sound, video, graphics or GPS data—to allow visitors to see ‘before-and-after’ views including fire damage, Faraway Ranch, the CCC camp, and even the volcanic event that laid the foundation for the hoodoos.

- Create more focused programs/virtual tours/podcasts on the topics of:
  - The night sky
  - Faraway Ranch
  - Heart of Rocks

- Create a program geared towards children or other specialty groups, or target these groups using separate “tracks” within a program that has more general appeal

- Incorporate some of the content from http://www.nps.gov/webrangers/
Visitor Center and Hiker Shuttle

The 2011 Visitor Survey indicates that roughly 75% of visitors make the visitor center their first stop, and 85% visit the center at some point during their visit. Currently, interpretive staff at this CCC-era/Mission 66 visitor center keep busy directing hikers, walkers, horseback riders, birders, and other visitors or running the hiker shuttle up to Massai Point. Although modest in size, the visitor center is an area where the park should place much of their emphasis on interpretive media as it is a natural draw that is readily accessed by visitors along the park road with easy parking.

Exterior Area

The exterior of the visitor center is welcoming and historic, dating to the CCC era. Bathrooms are clearly visible from the parking lot. The following recommendations were made by the planning team to improve the functionality of this area:

- Add a set of attractive visitor orientation panels using a “trip planning by time” model similar to the one located in the Things to Do section of the website. These panels could replace the graphics currently outside the center.
- Enable visitors to gather, rest, and eat lunch in this area by adding several small picnic tables or benches in the area at the end of the nature trail.
- Add interpretive elements geared to visitors on horseback, including a hitching post at the visitor center parking lot with safety and other messages readable from horseback. The panels might feature a personified or characterized likeness of search-and-rescue horse Boomer.
- Add a water bottle filling station to the restroom area.
- Place botanical labels on nearby plants, indicating medicinal use by the Chiricahua Apache. Reinforce messages to leave plants intact.

Interior

The planning team identified the visitor center exhibits as a resource that should be prioritized for improvement. The following actions were recommended:

- Replace the exhibits currently in the center. A new interpretive plan and design should be developed addressing the following key issues:
  - The overall visitor experience including exterior areas, orientation, ranger interactions, the park film, and interpretive story
  - Visitor flow through the building. Any proposed modifications to the building interior would require approval from SHPO and consideration of historic fabric that exists throughout the interior of the building.
  - New exhibits should be hands-on, very interactive, accessible, and dialogue-based, with a focus on orientation, geology,
biodiversity, wilderness, natural processes, and the continuing legacy of the Chiricahua Apache culture.

- Where artifacts are to be used, the park should consider conservation-grade cases to protect organic materials. Taxidermy mounts are not recommended as they require significant maintenance over the lifetime of the exhibits.

- Replace the park film:
  - Consider integrated development of the park film and interpretive exhibits to better utilize both components and improve the cohesiveness of the visitor experience in the small visitor center.
  - Film should be 10-12 minutes in length and reflect the interpretive themes in this report.
  - The current film narration by Rex Allen, Sr. is distinctive and parts of it may still be relevant and appropriate today. Consider adaptive reuse of part or all of the current film audio.
  - New exhibits should allow for seated viewing of the film.

- Implement improvements to the bookstore:
  - Add a vending machine with healthy hiking snacks
  - Offer a small variety of non-perishable food for sale in the store (there is no access to retail areas near Chiricahua).
  - Add a hardcover children’s book and a coffee-table photo book for sale that are specifically about Chiricahua.

**Along the Drive**
The ranger-driven shuttle van makes one 8-mile-long trip daily to Massai Point at 8:30 am. This is an opportunity to deliver interpretive messages to passengers. However the driver is not able to address the entire van while safely navigating the vehicle along the winding mountain road. Suggested improvements to the shuttle service are:

- Add additional shuttle trip mid-morning in the high season (staff levels permitting).

- Create an audio tour for the ride up to Massai Point that can be broadcast in the media player of the shuttle van. This recording could be professionally-produced and might include appropriate background music, professional narration, hiking safety messages, and call-outs of relevant formations or views that can be seen from the vehicle (where it is possible to sync with driving times.) Where significant park features are called out, the driver may be prompted to safely stop the vehicle to allow visitors to take in the views described.

- Move from the use of the 12-passenger van to a convertible van, safari jeep, or double-decker bus for the hiker shuttle, allowing visitors a better view on the ride up.
**Lookouts, Trailheads, and Wilderness Areas**

**Massai Point**
Massai Point is the dropoff area for the hiker shuttle and also has parking available for visitors who drive up the park road themselves. At Massai Point visitors can tour a small visitor center (the center is not wheelchair accessible due to a step at the threshold and the narrow width of its entry door), a nature trail, and a number of viewpoints with interpretive waysides. Recommended improvements to this area suggested by the planning team include:

- Place a relief map of Chiricahua in the exhibit building or in a wheelchair-accessible location at Massai Point. A relief map was part of the original design of the visitor center building but it has been subsequently removed.

- Placing a new or refurbished relief model in the building or an exterior-grade map outside the building would allow visitors to orient themselves and see the scale of the park from this vantage point.

- Add a webcam at Massai Point.

- Revamp Speaker’s Rock by improving spotting scopes, adding more binoculars, and other touchable, attractive elements to the area such as bronze castings of animals, peaks and ridges, geologic timelines or landscape elements. Utilize this area for small-group interpretive programs.

- Complete a wayside evaluation and plan for this area. The following topics and locations should be considered in a new wayside plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Type of Element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Massai Point area</td>
<td>Create a wayside on the topic of fire</td>
<td>Low-profile sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massai Point Area</td>
<td>Interpret Apache communications using smoke signals</td>
<td>Low-profile sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massai Point Area</td>
<td>Map of historic hoodoo names, sourced from a WPA booklet in park archives</td>
<td>Low-profile sign or signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massai Point Area</td>
<td>Photo display, show CHIR then and now with historic and modern images, including burned areas.</td>
<td>Low-profile sign or signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massai Point Nature Trail</td>
<td>Re-evaluate interpretive signs on nature trail</td>
<td>Low-profile signs or smaller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailheads at Massai Point</td>
<td>Provide more signs at trailheads dealing with safety and ability level, water and equipment needed to complete hikes.</td>
<td>Upright wayside</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sugarloaf Fire Lookout**

Visitors may hike a strenuous climb to this working guard station. To improve the visitor experience here, the park could:

- Offer overnight working stays to visitors at Sugarloaf Guard Station.
- Add a webcam at the Sugarloaf Mountain lookout.
- Train lookout staff to provide some interpretive messages to visitors they encounter. Provide them with brochures, maps or media to show visitors.

**Other Wilderness Areas**

Much of the park beyond the roads and parking areas is designated wilderness, accessible only by foot or horseback. It is in these areas that visitors are looking for solitude, a sense of discovery, and few signs of human presence. It is recommended that the park aim to keep these areas free of signs beyond necessary directional markers. Existing routed wood labels near the most popular hoodoo formations are historical fabric and must be left in place. Considerations for this area:

- Create a parkwide wilderness plan that includes backcountry use for camping.
- Create a new trail on the east side of the park road. Partner with adjoining managed lands to make it a thru-hike connecting Chiricahua with the USFS land and ultimately, Fort Bowie National Historic Site.

**Faraway Ranch and Historic District**

The historic district begins at the parking lot near the Faraway Ranch Picnic area and encompasses the entire Faraway ranch site including the main house and outbuildings, Stafford Cabin, and the remains of the CCC work camp. Recommendations for the building interiors, exterior areas, and overall interpretation throughout the district were discussed.

**Interior Areas**

- Decorate the ranch house for the holidays, find historic décor when possible.
- Stage or furnish the Cowboy House and Neil’s Den.
- Remodel Neil’s Den to be used as a venue for rotating exhibits, local artist shows, or photography exhibits.
- Open Stafford cabin to visitors.
Exterior Areas
The park can improve the appearance of and interpretive value of exterior areas in the historic district with the following actions:

• Plant and maintain a garden and orchard trees.

• Add period outdoor seating and other elements to the exterior areas to make it a richer, more authentic historic district experience.

• Improve the trail to make it wheelchair accessible and ensure that access to the first floor of the ranch house is also wheelchair-accessible.

• Repair the windmill so that it functions properly.

• Adaptively re-use the corrals to house the search-and-rescue horse or allow concessioners to board horses there.

Waysides
The historic district is in need of a new completed cultural landscape report (an existing historic structure report dates to 1984 and others have been in progress since then), a wayside assessment, and an overall interpretive plan. This plan should include the Bonita Creek/Canyon picnic area and follow the guidelines of the NPS Sign System. The following ideas for waysides were generated during the planning process and should be considered when developing a wayside interpretive plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Type of Element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonita Creek and Faraway picnic areas</td>
<td>Create waysides in these areas</td>
<td>Low-profile sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faraway Ranch picnic area</td>
<td>Create an accessible interpretive loop trail with interpretive signage</td>
<td>Series of low-profile waysides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faraway Ranch parking area</td>
<td>Replace graphics to emphasize spectrum of users of the area: CCC, Ranch, Chiricahua Apache, Buffalo Soldiers, Wildlife</td>
<td>Upright wayside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faraway Ranch parking area</td>
<td>Orientation to the historic district. Include dispenser for historic district trail guide and information on smartphone tour (if available)</td>
<td>Upright wayside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faraway Ranch parking area</td>
<td>Create a tactile map of the historic district</td>
<td>Wheelchair-accessible (approx 30” high) durable exterior grade tactile map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faraway Ranch parking area</td>
<td>Replace existing digital kiosk</td>
<td>Low-profile wayside and digital interface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three waysides outside Faraway Ranch house</td>
<td>Re-position along established path lines to the house. Re-evaluate content.</td>
<td>Low-profile waysides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Spur Guest Ranch</td>
<td>Provide more information about this guest ranch</td>
<td>Low-profile wayside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC camp</td>
<td>Add images of the CCC camp to waysides</td>
<td>Low-profile wayside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil’s Den</td>
<td>Repair the audio exhibit</td>
<td>Audio exhibit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Top: living room in the Faraway Ranch house
Bottom left: kitchen of the house
Bottom right: Dining room showing hearth with stones from monument created by Buffalo Soldiers
Personal Services

Currently the staff does not offer a regular, year-round schedule of ranger walks and talks. The planning team reported that some talks offered in the past have been underused due to lack of a good method to publicize them, the fact that visitors tend to arrive in smaller groups and embark on activities individually, and lack of a central viewpoint or meeting place at Massai Point. Although maintaining consistent attendance is a challenge, when visitors have taken advantage of formal and informal ranger programs they have responded very positively to them. Many of the recommendations that came from the planning workshops focus on ranger-led activities and the interpretive team encourages the park to find ways to plan, publicize, and engage groups of visitors for these events. Ideas around this concept include:

- Hold a “coffee or cocoa with a ranger” at the campsite during busy times. The park has tried this before and has found it to be successful.

- Obtain and promote international dark sky park status with ranger talks. Develop a night sky program and include subject matter experts.

- Hold the talk at Massai or Echo point and include telescopes for viewing.

- Do a “Salted Trail” activity on the SS trail (place tracks and other interpretive elements along the way for a group to discover.)

- Consider offering overnight camps and day camps for children. These might occur over holidays or school breaks and the park may choose to team with other agencies or groups to develop them. Themes might be astronomy camp, summer camp, or paleontology camp.

- Provide longer, in-depth programs for families (2-4 hours) and advertise them at the campsite where families are likely to plan for a multi-day experience. Use visitor use surveys to determine best times for this programming.

- Increase the amount of roving ranger time at wilderness points/Massai point.

- Provide more evening programs at the campsite, regular tours, talks, and walks about fire, wilderness, nature, flora & fauna.
Off-site Activities and Partnerships

Partnerships and civic engagement have proven to benefit both park sites and regional communities. Currently, offsite activities that the park participates in are successful and plans are in place to continue park presence at local events, festivals, and conferences. The park should establish an offsite presence in some new areas or strengthen partner/stakeholder relationships with the following actions:

- Create a kiosk in the Tucson airport for Fort Bowie and associated Southeast Arizona (SEAZ) parks. Attractive maps, graphics, photos, and scannable codes that point to the park websites or allow downloads of smartphone tours could be added as these elements are developed.

- Reach out to Apache bands (Ft. Sill Apache, Mescalero Apache, White Mountain Apache, and San Carlos Apache) and invite them to the park for both special events and more informal interpretive events. Create a networking relationship with these groups to establish a welcoming rapport through which individuals and groups might be encouraged to use the park more frequently, speak informally or to groups of visitors, bring youth or other groups to learn about the site, volunteer, participate in special events, or contribute to future interpretive efforts at the park.

- Research and apply for grants to support web development, publications, interpretive media, or fund transportation costs for student groups.

- Increase PR for the park by writing and submitting articles and photos to tourism magazines, blogs, tourism sites, historical publications and magazines, local and Tucson media, and other outlets.

- Do a “Ranger Read” at the Willcox library.

- Work with regional parks and forts at the state and local level to build relationships and pool resources. Joint activities might include:
  - Creating, publicizing, and advertising a regional history driving tour
  - Publishing a joint annual or quarterly newsletter
  - Creating special events that highlight more than one park or site

- Encourage visitors to join the Natural History Association (NHA) and submit their email addresses to a mailing list for periodic updates. Email updates might include volunteer opportunities, capital projects that need funding (through NHA), special events, and volunteer appreciation events.

- Present ranger talks and small events offsite in local communities and businesses or in Tucson jointly with other SEAZ parks. Themes might include birding, photography, or human history.

- Actively recruit tour operators to bring groups to the park by bus.

- Offer kennel services or try to partner with neighbors to offer them to allow people travelling with dogs to visit the park.

- Facilitate creation of a Friends of Chiricahua National Monument.
Education Program

Chiricahua’s educational programs are offered on an on-demand basis, either offsite or with groups at the park. The park’s location far from local towns means that few school groups are able to secure the funding and transportation to reach the park. Recommendations for enhancing the education program on- and off-site include:

- Develop a wider variety of school programs, both on-site and in-classroom, and provide a summary on the website of available activities, intended grade level and curriculum fulfillment, and associated teaching tools.
- Assemble a set of themed teaching trunks, give instructions for teachers to create their own trunks, or mail smaller versions of teaching trunks to educators. Items to include: costumes, artifacts, games, and other related activities. Suggested themes: plants and animals, pioneers and the ranch era, Chiricahua Apache culture, geology, and the night sky.
- Create a general Teacher’s Guide to Chiricahua with lesson plans, suggested classroom activities, worksheets, and curriculum standards information. Make this guide available on the web and send bound copies on-demand to schools and districts.
- Increase the frequency of ranger trips to local schools for classroom presentations and lessons.
- Expand the Junior Ranger program, possibly with a component to become a virtual junior ranger through the website. Consider adding a senior ranger program.
- Build an outdoor classroom for use by groups on-site at the park.

Special Events

Increased time, effort, and planning are required to create annual or special events, but the impact can be dramatic and memorable for the park, the community, stakeholders, and others who have the opportunity to attend. Special events are also a place for the staff’s creativity to shine. Ideas for both annual and special events include:

- Create a halloween or ghost-themed program at Faraway Ranch.
- Plan a wilderness skills training. This might be an opportunity to partner with other conservation groups such as Sky Island Alliance.
- Develop a “Progressive Drive” where visitors make several stops along the park road from the visitor center to Massai Point. Educational events and activities would be part of each stop.
- Plan a living history day or series of events in the historic district. Include period programming such as butter churning, washboards, ice cream making, and showing movies or a slideshow in the evening on the side of the house as Ed Riggs used to do.
- Sponsor a 5K bike or fun run — this also has the possibility of being a fundraiser which would require a partnership with the Natural History Association.
- Partner with Apache representatives to plan an Apache-themed special event with dances, food, and interpretive-themed events.
Volunteer Program

Volunteers play an important role at Chiricahua as the staff is small and there are ever-increasing demands on their time. With current budget levels, increasing staff levels may not be as realistic as planning for increased volunteer program capacity. Strategies include:

- Begin an Artist in the Park program.
- Promote internship opportunities with programs such as Student Conservation Association (SCA) and Youth in Parks (YIP).
- Start a docent program to recruit volunteer naturalists.
- Invite outside speakers with subject matter expertise (birders, astronomers, geologists, etc.) to speak at the park.
- Start an Adopt-a-_______(animal) Program. Participants would make donations, be mentioned on the park website or in the visitor center, and if possible, have the opportunity to do service activities such as wildlife counts, invasive plant removal, or interpretive talks as part of the program.

Housing for Volunteers

Both the campground and off-site locations are resources that the park may choose to focus on to improve the quality of their volunteer program by offering higher-quality accommodations for long-term stays. Retired volunteers who travel by RV are looking for sites with RV hookups or temporary housing options. In order to attract these volunteers, the park may consider the following actions:

- Remodel the existing CCC-era house in the campground to accommodate volunteers.
- Add hook-ups to some sites in the campground or along the headquarters road, and reserve these for long-term volunteer use.
- Add showers to the campground.
- Consider offsite housing in partnership with park neighbors including J Ranch, located just outside park boundaries.

Publications and Archival Materials

Current park publications such as the trail guide and Unigrid brochure serve the park and visitors well. Additional publications and archival material, which should be delivered both digitally and in printed form, include:

- A birding tour guide available at visitor center
- A park newsletter
- Organization of photographic resources. The park should prioritize finding a photography intern to organize historical images, take new images of the park for use in exhibits, publications, publicity materials, and the website, and create a searchable image database.
Website and Social Media

The website currently provides basic trip planning information and some interpretive content. Online orientation and pre-visit functions of the website have been addressed in that section of this report. The planning team agreed that interpretive content should be expanded to more richly reflect all of the primary interpretive themes, and some ideas for expanded content include:

- plant and animal photos and descriptions.
- a virtual tour of the park/visitor center, and specific areas of the park (also mentioned in the Digital Media section of this report).
- a weather feed and weather station information.
- areas focused on stories of women, children, and the Chiricahua Apache.

Chiricahua NM can utilize social media to connect with a broader audience. With a relatively small investment of time and resources, social media sites provide a venue for which to facilitate relationships with visitors and potential visitors to the resource. In a park where visitor patterns can be erratic, it is probable that interpreters will be able to find time to make updates to a social media page during a shift at the visitor center.

It is recommended that a park wishing to engage in social media marketing connect to sites of peer organizations and track service-wide trends in social media use. Park management should establish a simple social media strategy based on the management goals listed in the foundational section of this report and if needed, seek the support of Harper’s Ferry Design Center or other media resources provided by the NPS. The park should make a commitment to regular maintenance of a social media site before initiating the effort—unused social media sites do not provide any advantage over no presence at all. Ideas for social media engagement generated by the planning team include:

- Repost, comment on, begin discussion about, or excerpt from relevant stories from local or national news media that relate to the park, interpretive themes, conservation or environmental issues, or park partners.
- Begin a series of posts such as “Did you know?” to provide snippets of interpretive content, perhaps timed with holidays or significant events in the park’s history.
- Participate in social media sites that rely on images and build themed collections of photography that allow visitors to see the park and contribute their own images. Suggested collections:
  - Photos through the seasons, or time-lapse photography
  - Photos of visitors: junior ranger swear-ins, special events, or significant groups at the park
  - Photos by visitors (curated)
  - Interesting formations—ask visitors to provide a name for the formation in a comment
- Post seasonal, weather, safety, and wildlife updates such as animals sighted at the park, unusual weather conditions, and road and trail closures, or changes in hours of operation.
- Pose trivia questions and have a contest for the right answer.
Home page of the Chiricahua website

All Areas of the Park are Open
Bonita Canyon Drive, Massai Pl, Echo Canyons, and all areas of the park are open. The hikers shuttle and entrance fees will start December 10.

more...

Welcome!
A "Wonderland of Rocks" is waiting for you to explore at Chiricahua National Monument. The 8-mile paved scenic drive and 17-miles of day-use hiking trails provide opportunities to discover the beauty, natural sounds, and inhabitants of this 11,985 acre site. Visit the Faraway Ranch Historic District to discover more about the people who have called this area home.

Horseshoe Two Fire - 2011
On May 8, 2011, the Horseshoe Two Fire started on the east side of the Chiricahua Mountains near the community of Portal. The fire continued to burn steadily, heading to the northwest, and on June 8, the fire reached Chiricahua National Monument, burning into the southeast corner of the park. In total, the Horseshoe Two Fire burned a total of 223,000 acres within the Chiricahua Mountains. No structures were lost at Chiricahua National Monument; however, 180% of the acreage did burn to some extent. While the fire burned intensely in some areas of the park, patches of green, and natural sources of water are still to be found.

more...
Implementation Plan

The measure of success of any plan is the extent to which it is implemented. Initial implementation of strategies needs to be both realistic and flexible. Because funding opportunities and priorities often change, park management may need to adjust the implementation strategies to adapt to changing conditions. The park interpretive staff and key park partners should meet each year to draft an Annual Implementation Plan for each new fiscal year based on funding opportunities and coordination with other projects. Flexibility is extremely important to allow park staff and partners the opportunity to try new and different interpretive ideas and make adjustments as necessary.

At the Recommendations workshop, the planning team spent time prioritizing the recommendations that are listed on pages 26-39.

- First, participants ranked the recommendations as short-term, medium-term, or long-term priorities.

- The recommended actions in the charts below reflect this prioritization. Within each timeframe, they are listed by category.

- Please see the corresponding page number for a description of the action.

- Recommendations that are not listed in these charts but are mentioned in the preceding Recommendations section did not receive votes by the planning team. They should still be considered for inclusion in each year’s annual interpretive plan.
### Short-Term Priority Actions (1-3 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Center</td>
<td>New visitor center exhibits</td>
<td>28-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Label plants &amp; create waysides on nature trail near visitor center</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Services</td>
<td>“Salted trail” activities on silver spur trail</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overnight camps or day camps</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longer, in-depth programs for families (2-4 hours)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do period programming in Historic District</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>Living History Day</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massai Point</td>
<td>Add a wayside on the topic of fire</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Add a relief model of the park, inside Massai Point visitor center or outside</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase ranger-led activities at Massai Point</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Add a wayside about Apache communication</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkwide</td>
<td>Add recycle centers throughout the park</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>Gain International Dark Sky park status</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Improve Junior Ranger Program and develop a Senior Ranger program</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Medium-Term Priority Actions (4-6 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parkwide</td>
<td>Create an e-tour for mobile devices, parkwide wi-fi</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Center - Exterior</td>
<td>Create more gathering areas near visitor center</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiker Shuttle</td>
<td>Create an audio tour for the hiker shuttle ride</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Services</td>
<td>Create a night sky program at Massai/Echo point</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massai Point and Sugarloaf Lookout</td>
<td>Add webcams</td>
<td>30-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a wayside plan for Massai point</td>
<td>30-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic District</td>
<td>Do a wayside assessment for the historic district, a cultural landscape report, and an overall interpretive plan for the area.</td>
<td>31-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Add period outdoor seating and other elements to create a richer, more authentic experience</td>
<td>31-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Add images of the CCC camp to waysides</td>
<td>31-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>Create a birding tour guide</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Long-Term Priority Actions (7-10 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parkwide</td>
<td>Add solar panels to bathrooms, ramadas, VC and entrance station</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual tour of Heart of Rocks, other trails, and Historic District</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Center</td>
<td>Create a new CHIR movie</td>
<td>28-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiker Shuttle</td>
<td>Get a convertible van/safari jeep/double-decker bus for shuttle transportation</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilderness points and areas</td>
<td>Do a wilderness plan that includes backcountry use and camping.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic District</td>
<td>Provide more information about Silver Spur Guest Ranch</td>
<td>31-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use corrals for park search and rescue horse or allow concessioners to corral horses there</td>
<td>31-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage/furnish the cowboy house and Neil's den</td>
<td>31-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Build an outdoor classroom</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendices
Appendix 1: Interpretive Subthemes

Several of the primary interpretive themes were derived from subthemes brainstormed at the Foundations and Recommendations Workshops. Not all interpretive themes have subthemes, and subthemes provided do not encompass all concepts that may be included in an interpretive theme. The ideas below, deemed by the planners and stakeholders as important to highlight, are provided to assist the interpretive team in future efforts.

1 Geology Theme

The dramatic beauty and quiet mystery of Chiricahua NM belies the violent volcanic deposition of white-hot ash that laid the foundation for a geologic work-in-progress.

[No Subthemes for Geology]

Best places to interpret theme 1—Geology: website, visitor center, campground, along the park road, Massai Point and Sugarloaf Lookout, Echo Canyon, and offsite locations.

2 Biodiversity Theme

Chiricahua NM provides visitors and researchers opportunities to explore and study richly diverse plant and animal life where natural processes continue relatively unaffected by human influence.

Subthemes for Biodiversity

- Changes in climate and land use affect biodiversity, including the shifting of habitats and species.
- The sky island nature of the Chiricahua Mountains encompasses multiple life zones and diverse species — from the desert floor to the coniferous forest — that can be experienced in a very short distance.
- Sky islands are refuges for species that are geographically isolated, species unique to these biomes, and a few migratory species with the ability to transcend great distances.

Best places to interpret theme 2—Biodiversity: all areas of the park, website, and offsite.

3 Wilderness Values Theme

The remoteness of Chiricahua NM provides for contemplation and imagination through solitude, exploration, and discovery of the natural world—away from the distractions of contemporary life.

Subthemes for Wilderness Values

- The remoteness of the area provides for the experience and enjoyment of a natural soundscape free from the intrusion of human noise.
- The vastness and wonder of the night sky at Chiricahua NM continues to inspire human contemplation and imagination as it has across cultures and throughout the ages.
- Class I Air quality due to geography and location provide opportunities to breathe clean air and experience a landscape relatively untouched by air pollution.

Best places to interpret theme 3—Wilderness Values: website, visitor center, campground, along the park road, Massai Point and Sugarloaf Lookout, Echo Canyon, and offsite locations.
4  Human History Theme

Stories of struggle, perseverance, stewardship, and connection to the land unite the experiences of the prehistoric indigenous peoples, the Chiricahua Apache, the Buffalo Soldiers, the workers of the CCC camps, and the early settlers here—all left a lasting legacy and were in turn transformed by their experiences.

Subthemes for Human History

• The Chiricahua Apache travelled lightly over great distances, repurposed useful items, and left little physical evidence of their presence.

• Chiricahua NM is a small part of a vast area that was home to the Chiricahua Apache until they were forcibly removed, breaking the physical connection to the land, although the spiritual connection remains.

• Faraway Ranch serves as an example of the transition from pioneer homestead to public guest ranch and, through historic preservation and adaptive reuse, provides an intact, evocative place where visitors can envision an earlier time.

• Visitors today can continue the tradition of stewardship that encompasses the Chiricahua Apache’s respect for the land, the hard fought efforts of the Erickson-Riggs family to preserve it, and the efforts of the CCC to enhance opportunities to experience it.

Best places to interpret theme 4—Human History: website, visitor center, campground, along the park road, Massai Point and Sugarloaf Lookout, historic district, cemetery, and offsite locations.

5  Fire Ecology Theme

Fire has always been a part of this place. It brings dramatic change that revitalizes, regenerates, and promotes the health of the landscape.

Subthemes for Fire Ecology

• There has been a change in paradigm from always suppressing fire to recognizing its importance and using it to manage and restore natural processes.

• Post-fire succession provides an opportunity to experience and understand the regeneration of natural ecosystems and the mosaic of ever-evolving landscapes.

Best places to interpret theme 5—Fire Ecology: website, visitor center, campground, along the park road, Massai Point and Sugarloaf Lookout, Echo Canyon, historic district, and offsite locations.
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