If you are interested in obtaining further information on any of the parks profiled in this issue of the *INTERPARK MESSENGER* Please feel free to contact them by phone or letter. They will be happy to assist you.
NAVAJO NATIONAL MONUMENT

Navajo National Monument is located west of Kayenta, Ariz., on the Navajo Indian Reservation (off U.S. Highway 160, 10 miles north of the Black Mesa junction on St. Hwy. 564). This picturesque monument was established in 1909, and features remarkably preserved cliff ruins. These villages, now vacant, were built and occupied 700 years ago by members of the prehistoric Kayenta Anasazi culture.

A pinyon and juniper forest surrounds the visitor center at an elevation of 7300 feet above sea level. Summer temperatures often reach over 90°F (F), but cool off pleasantly by evening. Afternoon thundershowers are common in July and August, while snow and sub-freezing temperatures are likely during the winter months.

SANDAL TRAIL

Open year-round during daylight hours, this self-guided, one-mile (roundtrip) rim trail leads to an overlook for a breathtaking view of the scenic Betatakin ruin across the canyon, 1½ mile away. Along the trail, waysides exhibits identify plant uses among the Navajo, Hopi, and the prehistoric Anasazi. Average walking time on the paved trail is 45 minutes (roundtrip). Binoculars are recommended, although there is a telescope at the overlook.

BETATAKIN RUIN TOURS

The Betatakin ruin lies in one of the more dramatic southwestern settings. Its high-vaulted alcove opens onto a red rock canyon, forested with aspen, fir and oak. The ranger-guided hiking tour follows a 5-mile (roundtrip) route with a 700 foot descent into the canyon. This usually takes 5-6 hours, and is as strenuous as an equivalent hike into the Grand Canyon. At least one quart of water per person and sturdy shoes are recommended for the tour.

Tours are limited to 25 people, on a first-come, first-served basis. Each person must pick up their own free ticket in person at the visitor center on the morning of the tour. Advance reservations are not accepted. Demand for a spot on the hike is high, so arrive early!

The tours begin once daily at 10:00 a.m. (MDT) starting early May, and increase to twice daily by Memorial Day. At 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon (MDT). After Labor Day, tours are again offered once daily until October.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO CALL FOR INFORMATION PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT, SINCE TIMES AND SCHEDULES OFTEN CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE!

During hot weather, by late June, this walk becomes quite arduous, as there is little shade on the trail except at the ruin. Rain gear is recommended when summer thunderstorms occur during July and August. If you have heart or respiratory trouble, or are out of condition, the high altitude, heat, and steep grade of the trail can make the trip difficult and should not be attempted. Dangerous rockfall from the ceiling of the cave is sometimes possible and may cause abrupt changes in the tour schedule.

KEET SEEL BACKCOUNTRY PERMITS

This large, remarkably preserved cliff dwelling is located 8½ miles (one-way) from the visitor center. It is only accessible by hiking or horseback trips, with an NPS backcountry permit. While hiking permits are free, horse trips to Keet Seel are provided by a local Navajo family through the monument, and cost $55 per person for the day-long outing. Those accustomed to desert backpacking or trail riding will find it an enjoyable experience. No water is available at the primitive campground near the ruin.

Backcountry permits are required and reservations for them may be made by contacting the visitor center up to two months ahead of your trip date. Permits are limited to 20 people per day, from Memorial Day weekend (late May) to Labor Day (early Sept.).

CALL THE MONUMENT FOR DETAILS ON ARRANGING A VISIT TO THE RUIN.

CAMPING

Camping is also free at the monument, and is available on a first-come, first-served basis (7 day maximum). The main campground features 30 sites (no hookups or showers), including one accessible campsite. Vehicles larger than 25 feet in length are discouraged, due to limited passage through the campground.

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The smaller, overflow group campground has chemical restrooms but no water. Group reservations may be booked for parties of at least 10, but no more than 30 people.

Wood fires are not permitted at the Monument.

WUPATKI NATIONAL MONUMENT

Within 35 miles of Flagstaff are three unique landmarks: Wupatki, Sunset Crater Volcano, and Walnut Canyon National Monuments. Each area possesses its own distinctive qualities and share the diversity of the southern Colorado Plateau. Volcanoes, earthquakes, and lava flows, changed the face of the landscape. Cultures that once touched this land, left ruins and traces of their civilization about which we continue to marvel.

WUPATKI NATIONAL MONUMENT

Situated in the rain shadow of the San Francisco Peaks, the area we now call Wupatki National Monument was once home to the farmers and traders of the Anasazi and Sinagua people, or Hisatsinom, as their Hopi descendants call them. The area is characterized by free-standing masonry pueblos, fieldhouses and fields, evidence of a varied and complex lifestyle.

Today at Wupatki, you can visit four of the pueblos by walking short trails that allow you a window into the past. Wupatki Ruin is the largest of the pueblos, having approximately 85 rooms and up to 200 residents in its heyday, and is located just behind the Wupatki Visitor Center. Wukoki Ruin, 2½ miles from the Visitor Center, is a smaller pueblo that probably housed only two or three families. Following the Park road out to the north and west will take you past the Lomaki and Citadel Ruins complexes. Surrounding these pueblos are the fields in which many of the crops were grown.

Also of significance in the monument are the many geologic features. These include remnants of volcanic activity and extensive limestone and sandstone formations. This is the landscape that shaped the lives of those here in the past.

Wupatki is well known to academic and research personnel, and is often included as a destination by visitors touring other southwest archeological sites.

WUPATKI VISITOR CENTER

Located 35 miles northeast of Flagstaff, Arizona off Hwy. 89. Facilities include a museum, book store, restrooms, overlook, and a short trail. Wupatki Visitor Center is open all year except for Christmas Day. Hours of operation are 8 a.m.—5 p.m. in the winter and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer, as staffing permits. Interpretive programs are offered daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

No food or lodging available. Elevation 4,900 feet.
SUNSET CRATER VOLCANO NATIONAL MONUMENT

In A.D. 1064-1065, an eruption brought the dormant San Francisco Volcanic Field back to life. When the field again grew quiet nearly 200 years later, a classic example of a cinder cone, Sunset Crater Volcano, loomed over a dramatically altered land. Today, the National Park Service preserves and interprets the volcano, its effects on the people, and the geology of the Flagstaff area.

The 1,000 foot Sunset Crater and its subsidiary formations are the prominent features and a distinctive highlight of the geology of the diverse Colorado Plateau. Even now, long after its formation, it is influenced by various forces of nature. Plant and animal life of the region have evolved and adapted to local conditions and are significant to the ecology of the entire region. Several threatened and endangered species of flowers survive in the cinder-covered hills surrounding the Crater.

At the base of the Crater, there is a self-guiding one mile or one-half mile loop trail with booklets available at the trailhead and Visitor Center.

One can see lava flows and cinder hills close up. Overlooks and small trails are also available in the area to view the dramatic landscape.

VISITING SUNSET CRATER VOLCANO

Located 20 miles northeast of Flagstaff off Hwy. 89, Sunset Crater Visitor Center is open all year except for Christmas Day. Hours of operation are 8 a.m.—5 p.m. in the winter and 8 a.m.—6 p.m. in summer, as staffing permits. The facilities include a museum, bookstore, trails and an overlook.

The U.S. Forest Service operates nearby Bonito campground.

Elevation—7,000 feet
No food or lodging available.

WALNUT CANYON NATIONAL MONUMENT

Walnut Canyon National Monument was established in 1915 to preserve numerous Prehistoric archaeological sites which are spectacularly located in cliffs and along the rim of Walnut Canyon. The focus of the proclamation was protection from looting and vandalism of the cliff dwelling structures located under the canyon's limestone ledges.

A UNIQUE ECOSYSTEM

The 400 foot deep canyon meanders through Permian age Kaibab Limestone and Coconino Sandstone, and drains off the Mogollon Rim Plateau to the northeast toward the Little Colorado River. The canyon lies in an ecotone between the Montane forests along the crest of the Mogollon Rim Plateau and the desert regions of the Little Colorado Valley. Ponderosa Pine forests are dominant to the west and south and overlap with the Pinon/Juniper woodlands to the east and north. Micro-environments, created by the meandering course of the canyon, make Walnut Canyon unique to its surroundings and probably attracted the first people to utilize the diverse resources found here.

Evidence of human use at Walnut Canyon can be traced back over 2,000 years. Based on ceramic analysis and tree ring dates, most Sinagua sites in the area date from A.D. 1150-1225. The progression of cultural change and adaptation of the Sinagua is clearly evident at Walnut Canyon.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Surface archaeological data of the Sinagua include cliff dwellings, pueblos, fieldhouses, pithouses, a community room, fortifications, petroglyphs, and extensive artifact scatters. Along the rims of Walnut Canyon, evidence of farming devices such as check dams are preserved. They are frequent and intact enough to provide the best archaeological evidence of these features in the Flagstaff area. These cultural resources hold nationally significant values for scientific assessment of the prehistoric Sinagua settlement and land-use patterns.

After a stop at the visitor center, you can stroll the paved "Island Trail" (1 mile), down 185 feet to the 24 cliff dwellings. This trail is considered moderate to strenuous. You can also wander along the rim trail (1/4 mile), which offers dramatic views of the canyon and cliff dwellings. This trail is level and is handicapped accessible.

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The U.S. Forest Service operates nearby Bonito campground.

Elevation—7,000 feet
No food or lodging available.
Located off of I-40 between Gallup, New Mexico and Holbrook, Arizona, Petrified Forest National Park is best known for its colorful petrified wood and views of the Painted Desert. Less known, but equally impressive, are the extensive deposits of Triassic-age fossils and the remnants of ancient Pueblo Indian cultures. The 28 mile main park road provides access to all that the park offers. The park is open year round from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. These hours may be extended during the summer. Please call (602) 524-6228 for exact times.

If you are travelling west, you should use the north entrance off I-40 (exit 311), proceed south through the park to US 180, turn right to Holbrook and rejoin I-40 west. Eastbound visitors should enter the park at the south entrance via US 180 from Holbrook, travel north through the park and exit on I-40 eastbound.

There are three visitor centers in the park, each offering a variety of exhibits and information. The Painted Desert Visitor Center just off I-40 offers a 17 minute film entitled The Stone Forest every half hour. The historic Painted Desert Inn National Historic Landmark is a graceful, Pueblo Revival structure built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the late 1930's. It is located two miles from the north entrance on the rim above the Painted Desert and offers exhibits on the history of the Inn, travelling art shows and demonstrations by Native American craftsmen. The Rainbow Forest Museum at the south end of the park offers a variety of exhibits on the park's archeological and paleontological resources. Guided tours of the Museum are presented every hour during the summer months. The Petrified Forest Museum Association operates giftstores at each of the visitor centers and offers a variety of books, cards and slide sets on the park and other NPS sites in the area.

The Fred Harvey Company operates gift stores and cafeteria service at both the north and south entrances to the park. There is no lodging or campground available in the park, but these services may be found in the town of Holbrook 27 miles west on I-40.

Most of the petrified wood that can be easily seen is in the south end of the park from Rainbow Forest up through Blue Mesa. Many stopping points and several short trails offer ample opportunity to view and explore these extensive deposits.

The north end of the park road offers many vantage points of the Painted Desert. An easy half-mile long trail along the rim above the desert provides a chance to stretch your legs and view wildlife and plants typical of the area.


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Hubbell Trading Post is still open and active. It is the oldest continuously operated trading post on the Navajo Indian Reservation. The trading post was and still is a crossroads of cultures. Here you can participate in the unique experience of a park that preserves not only the past, but the inter-cultural exchange of the present. Take your time and explore the park, there is more to it than meets the eye.

Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site is open every day of the year except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during the summer and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. the rest of the year. Picnic tables are located near the visitor center, but no camping or overnight stay is permitted.

VISITOR CENTER
This is the place to begin your visit. Rangers can answer your questions, and you can watch Navajo rug weavers and a silversmith demonstrate their crafts. Books and video-cassettes are available for purchase as well.

HUBBELL HOME TOURS
Rangers provide daily tours of the Hubbell family home. Tours are free but limited to 15 people. A self-guided tour booklet of the Hubbell Trading Post compound is available at the Visitor Center.

THE TRADING POST
Here the business of trading continues. Explore the trader's office, the rug room and the bullpen.
Canyon De Chelly National Monument is located in the heart of the Navajo Reservation. It consists of two major canyons, Canyon De Chelly and Del Muerto. These canyon systems were formed millions of years ago by the uplift of the Defiance Plateau and stream erosion.

The elevation of the canyons range from 5500 feet, at the Visitor Center, to over 7000 feet, at the upper canyon rim areas. The major bio-region found here is high desert, characterized by the pinon-juniper woodland and an annual precipitation of less than ten inches. Average temperatures range from 0-10°F in the winter to 95-100°F in the summer.

The awesome beauty and spectacular scenery of these canyons have been "home" to people for the last two thousand years. It is a living example of a people's working relationship with the land, demonstrating ties of a practical, emotional and spiritual nature. The canyons provide a hospitable environment amidst a harsh landscape and the history of humans and their relationship to the land is both, rich and complex.

VISITOR SERVICES

The Visitor Center is open daily, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (Oct-April) and 8:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. (May-Sept.), including holidays. There is no entrance fee for the park. The town of Chinle offers fast-food outlets, restaurants, motels, service stations, grocery stores and laundromats. No banks or ATM's in Chinle. For further information, inquire at the Visitor Center.

Cottonwood Campground is located 1/2 mile from the Visitor Center. The campground is open year-round with no camping fees. Camp sites are available on a first-come, first-serve basis, limited to a 5-day stay. Facilities include restrooms, picnic tables, water and dump station. From November through March, only portable toilets and picnic tables are available. There are no shower facilities. Maximum length of RV's and trailers is 35 feet. Group sites are available for a minimum of 15 people and maximum of 25. No RV's are allowed in the group site area. Call (602) 674-5500. Camping outside of the designated area is not permitted.

The Thunderbird Lodge is located 1/2 mile from the Visitor Center. The Lodge is open year-round and offers reduced rates from November 1 through February 28. The Thunderbird Lodge also provides jeep tours into the canyon. A cafeteria and gift shop are located at the Lodge for your convenience. Reservations are recommended. Call (602) 674-5841.

Canyon De Chelly Motel and the Holiday Inn are located in the town of Chinle. For more information on hotel rates, call Canyon De Chelly Motel at (602) 674-5875 or the Holiday Inn at (602) 674-5000.

Horseback tours are available from two authorized horse operations. Tours are scheduled by the hour with extended rides and overnight trips also available. For more information, call Justin's Horse Rentals at (602) 674-5678 or Twin Trail Tours at (602) 674-8425.

Authorized Navajo Guides who provide firsthand knowledge of their homeland may be hired at the Visitor Center information desk. Hiking or 4-wheel (you provide the 4-wheel) tours are available. Free permits are required and can be obtained from the Visitor Center.

Enjoy the sight of Canyon De Chelly and Del Muerto by driving the north and south rim drives. Allow approximately two hours for each rim drive. Guide Books are available at the Visitor Center. The White House Trail is a self-guided trail which is about 2 1/2 miles round-trip and will take two hours. Carry plenty of water. Pets are not allowed on this trail.

Summer Ranger-led activities are available from Memorial Day to Labor Day. For more information write:

Superintendent, Canyon De Chelly N.M.
P.O. Box 588
Chinle, Arizona 86503
(602) 674-5500.

EL MORRO NATIONAL MONUMENT

Situated along the ancient road between the Zuni and Acoma pueblos, the white sandstone mesa of El Morro has long been a favorite resting spot for explorers and travelers. Today, El Morro National Monument preserves the voices of the three great cultures that make up the southwestern landscape.

The first people drawn to El Morro and its reliable pool of water were the Anasazi ancestors of the Zuni people. Beginning in 1275 A.D., the Anasazi built two large pueblos atop the mesa. Utilizing the natural water supply and the fertile volcanic soil of the surrounding valleys, the Anasazi lived at El Morro for nearly a century. Although the Anasazi had abandoned the mesa-top pueblos by 1350 A.D., they left behind hundreds of petroglyphs in the soft sandstone. These drawings of humans, animals and geometric designs remind us that recorded history did not necessarily begin with the arrival of the Europeans.

Pushing the frontiers of their colonial empire, Spanish explorers first ventured into the southwest in 1540. By the early 1600's the first Spanish colony in New Mexico had been established along the Rio Grande. The leader of the new colony, Don Juan de Onate, passed by El Morro in 1605, returning from his explorations to the Pacific Coast. Onate added his name and message to the face of El Morro in that year, and over the next two centuries a long procession of Spanish soldiers and missionaries, governors and settlers carved their names on the mesa wall.

Westward expansion of the emerging American republic brought the first Anglos to El Morro in the mid-1800's. In 1849, artist Richard H. Kern and Lt. James H. Simpson were the first Americans to leave their stories side by side in the sandstone. The pictures, signatures and messages written on El Morro are a testament to the living cultures and unique heritage of the American southwest.

VISITOR CENTER

Your visit to El Morro begins here. Rangers will answer your questions and orient you to the facilities and the trails. An entrance fee of $2 per person or $4 per carload is required. Children under 17 admitted free. Seniors 62 or older may purchase a Golden Age Passport for $10.00. The Golden Eagle, Golden Age and Golden Access passes are honored at the park. An annual El Morro pass can be purchased for $10.00.

The visitor center is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Memorial Day through Labor Day; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the rest of the year. The Monument is closed on Christmas and New Years Day.

MUSEUM

Museum exhibits located in the visitor center span 700 years of human history. A 12-minute video program provides an introduction to the area and its history.

SELF-GUIDING TRAILS

Two self-guiding trails are available. The Inscription Trail is a half-mile round trip walk along a paved surface. You will walk to the base of El Morro where you will see the Anasazi petroglyphs, old Spanish inscriptions and the names of American soldiers and emigrants from the 1800's. The Mesa Top Trail is a two-mile round trip hike across the mesa top, beginning with Inscription Rock and continues to the Anasazi ruins above. This trail focuses on the geology and archaeology of the area. A 200-foot climb and the uneven sandstone surface make this a more strenuous hike. Sturdy walking shoes and water are necessary.

The trails are open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Memorial Day through Labor Day; 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. during the remainder of the year.

Your visit begins at 7200 feet above sea level and goes up from there. The high elevation can adversely affect those not accustomed to it. Take it easy and do not overexert yourself. Rattlesnakes are a common sight during the summer. Stand back and let them pass or walk around them. Report all snake sightings to a ranger. The trails are subject to closure due to adverse weather conditions such as snow and ice, lightning or high winds.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Please remain on the established trails. Do not touch the inscriptions or deface the rock in any manner. Do not pick up or remove any objects from the archaeological sites. All plants and animals are protected within the park. Do not disturb or harm any of the natural features of El Morro. Pets are permitted on the trails, but must be on a leash at all times. Entry on the trails after hours is prohibited.

TAKE PRIDE

Please help to preserve America's past for the future. It is illegal to carve your own message at El Morro or to deface the rock in any fashion. Please leave archaeological sites untouched. Experience El Morro with your eyes and imagination only.
EL MALPAIS NATIONAL MONUMENT AND CONSERVATION AREA

EL Malpais National Monument and Conservation Area is jointly administered by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. This area, totalling over 377,000 acres, was established on December 31, 1987.

EL MALPAIS, Spanish for BADLANDS, is located in west central New Mexico. Nestled between majestic Mt. Taylor and the Zuni Mountains, it is best known for its pinnacles, fins, and mesas rising from three thousand to about one million years old exhibit diverse volcanic features, complex lava tube systems and unique vegetation associations. The area is also rich in human history. For over 10,000 years people have interacted with this landscape. American Indian traditions continue to flourish. For visitors, outdoor activities are endless. Here you can explore lava tubes, watch a bat flight, rediscover old homesteads, take a hike across lava flows, or trek up a sandstone canyon into the wilderness.

Two prominent State Highways, NM 53 on the west side and NM 117 on the east side provide access to this inspiring area.

AREAS ALONG NM 53

Zuni-Acoma Trail: This trail is part of an ancient Indian trade route which connected Acoma and Zuni Pueblos. Today this rugged 7½ mile hike crosses four of El Malpais’s major flows before reaching the east trailhead on NM 117.

The El Calderon Area: This area offers above ground exploration of sinkholes, aspen groves, the El Calderon crater and several lava trenches. Underground journeys take you into these lava tubes. Surface exploration is also encouraged.

Chaco Culture National Historical Park

Chaco Culture National Historical Park is in a long, shallow canyon that is centrally located within the San Juan Basin of northwestern New Mexico. The canyon was carved into the basin by what is now known as the Chaco Wash, a tributary of the San Juan River. The park lies primarily along this wash and its tributaries and includes archaeological sites inside and outside the canyon. These sites represent a prehistoric cultural system, which at one time extended throughout the basin. The San Juan Basin has been occupied for over 10,000 years and has been home to Paleo-Indians, Ancestral Puebloans, the Anasazi, the Navajo, and people of Hispanic and Anglo descent.

The Anasazi ruins of Chaco are the tangible remains of a culture that flourished in the canyon from A.D. 1000 through A.D. 1150. There are 13 major ruins in the canyon, and over 3,500 sites have been identified within the park boundaries. Out of the 3,500 sites, approximately half are different types), hard hat, gloves, protective clothing and sturdy boots.

Chain of Craters WSA: This wilderness study area contains a cluster of cinder cones which produced the area’s older lava flows. Hiking is encouraged and mountain biking is permitted on old roads.

West Malpais Wilderness: This area offers vast wilderness hiking opportunities including Hole-in-the-Wall, a 6,000 acre kipuka.

AREAS ALONG NM 117

BLM El Malpais Ranger Station: Visitor services are provided, including information, restrooms, water, exhibits, and publications.

Sandstone Bluffs Overlook: Excellent views are afforded from this sandstone ridge.

La Ventana Arch: A short trail leads to one of the largest natural sandstone arches in New Mexico.

Cebolla Wilderness: Wilderness hiking leads to the rediscovery of old homesteads and archaeological sites.

The Narrows: Exploring the top of this sandstone rim reveals outstanding views. Below, McCarty’s flow contains intriguing formations reminiscent from its geologically recent eruption. A picnic area is located at the southern end.

Brazos Canyon: It takes an effort to get here, but this beautiful canyon is a reward for 4-wheel drive vehicles or mountain bikes.

FOR YOUR SAFETY

Lava is rough and can cause accidents. It is also easy to get lost. Please use extreme care while hiking. We suggest that you wear a hat, sturdy hiking boots, and carry plenty of water. Before you journey into the back country areas, please stop at the El Malpais Information Center or Ranger Station for detailed information including maps, directions, back country permits and road conditions. Please sign in at all trail registers before hiking.

CHACO CULTURE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

The Chaco people left the canyon around A.D. 1200, and for a few centuries, Chaco remained undisturbed. The Navajo arrived in the area in the 1400’s but did not settle in the canyon until the early 1700’s. In the middle of the 19th century, several of the park’s major ruins were rediscovered and thoroughly described by first James H. Simpson, who came through the canyon on a military expedition. The first archaeological investigation in Chaco commenced in May 1896 when the Hyde Exploring Expedition started work on Pueblo Bonito. This expedition laid the foundations for the later archaeological excavations and surveys in the canyon and outlying areas and led to the creation of Chaco Canyon National Monument in 1907.

In 1896, a considerable amount of information has been learned about the ruins of Chaco and the people who built them. We know they designed their pueblos with coiled pots, wave sandals and carved flutes; just as we know the social ramifications of erecting these complex structures included the ability to organize and supervise laborers. Much of the information that is known has been determined through the archaeological record. Yet there is just as much that is not known about these structures, their determining prehistoric masons and their culture. We don’t know what their music sounded like or how their food tasted, nor do we know how they recognized the change in seasons or celebrated the birth of a baby. When you visit Chaco, enjoy these mysteries and allow your imagination to recreate what we can no longer see, hear, touch or smell. And, as you walk through these impressive structures of prehistory, be respectful and understand that there will always be questions about the canyon and its people that will remain unanswered.

Chaco Canyon National Monument was created by legislation on March 11, 1907, under the auspices of the 1906 Antiquities Act. In 1980, Public Law 96-550 was passed, which expanded the monument boundaries and changed it to Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The park received international recognition when it was recognized as a World Heritage Cultural Park on December 8, 1987.

From the north, Chaco Culture NHP can be reached by turning off New Mexico 44 at Nageezi and following San Juan County road 7800 for 11 miles to Mexico 57. The visitor center is 15 miles ahead on 57. Travelling from the south, pick up New Mexico 57 via Grants or Crownpoint, New Mexico. All of these routes include at least 20 miles of unpaved road, and during bad weather, inquire locally or call the park at (505) 786-7014 about the conditions of the roads.

There are no services available at the park and the nearest town is 60 miles away. Gallo campground is one mile from the visitor center and campsites are available on a first-come first-serve basis. Bring your own firewood or charcoal for there isn’t any available in the park. The campsite fee is $5.00 per night and the entrance fee to the park is $4.00 per vehicle.
Mesa Verde National Park is one of the most well-known archaeological sites in the entire world. The park was established in 1906 primarily to preserve the spectacular cliff dwellings of a long departed civilization. Millions of visitors regularly visit the park each year. O’neill in the world have toured the famed “Cliff Dwellings” in the past 88 years. Mesa Verde’s importance to the international community was firmly established when the park was selected in 1978 by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. Besides its well known archaeological fame, it also contains some of the most spectacular natural and scenic vistas in the South-west. The panoramic views from the entrance road range from near-by snow capped 14,000-foot mountain peaks in Colorado to distant views of the Colorado Plateau and high desert to the south and west.

For over a century, archaeologists and other visitors have been intrigued with the well preserved cliff dwellings nestléd high in the canyon’s cliffs. It seems that almost everyone who comes to Mesa Verde shares a common desire to learn more about our collective human past. When visitors look down on the ruins in the park, many wonder what life was like for earlier people who chose this place as their home. Many paths lead to remote walls, patches of ancient plaster and scattered wall paintings, is a very graphic place to come and ponder the lifeways of long ago. The rooms may be empty, but the setting fills minds with questions.

EXCAVATION

Earl H. Morris headed the first systematic dig at Aztec under the American Museum of Natural History. He was 25 when he began his work in 1916. He continued to excavate and stabilize portions of the site for seven seasons. In the 1930’s Morris returned to Aztec and supervised the removal of the Great Kiva, a task which demanded skill to preserve the building’s original appearance through scant remains uncovered during excavation. After excavating most of the West Ruin, he left portions unexcavated for investigations by future archaeologists certain to bring better techniques.

One of the largest buildings erected at Aztec was a multi-story pueblo, now called the West Ruin. Tree-ring dates reveal most of this structure went up between A.D. 1179 and A.D. 1115.

This pueblo resembled the great houses at Chaco, indicating a cultural connection. Over two dozen kivas and about 400 contiguous rooms enclosed a large central plaza. The plaza and a partially subterranean building which surrounded it, a Great Kiva, were used for community-wide ceremonies and other activities. The massive Chacoan style architecture, ceramics, and connecting roads.

The Hubbard Site nearby is one of a handful of trival structures in the Southwest. Three concentric rings of walls encircle a deep kiva. Other buildings include the East Ruin, another multi-story pueblo, and the Earl Morris Ruin, one of the earliest known.

VISITING THE AREA

The area is located about one mile from Aztec off U.S. Highway 550. Visitors should allow about 2½ hours to enjoy the monument. A 400-yard self-guiding trail winds through the West Ruin and Hubbard site, passing through the rooms with intact roofs and the reconstructed Great Kiva. The tour begins behind the visitor center, where visitors obtain a trail guide booklet. The visitor center has exhibits, book outlet, and visitor information. A 25-minute video entitled Anasazi is shown hourly. Interpretive talks are given daily, except on Saturday, throughout June, July, and August. The remainder of the monument is closed to the public. Visitors should allow about 1½ hours to see the exhibits and movie, and to walk the trail. The monument is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Memorial Day through Labor Day, and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. the rest of the year. It is closed Christmas and New Year’s Days.

FEES: The entrance fee is $2.00 per person. Children under 17 are free. Good Sam Eagle, Golden Age, and Golden Access Passports are honored and available at the information desk.

Services: A shaded picnic area with tables is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Food, gas, and lodging are available in Bayfield, about 15 miles away. Campgrounds include Riverside Park, about one mile away, Navajo Lake State Park, 25 miles east, and several other commercial campgrounds within 20 miles.

ACCESSIBILITY: A Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) is available. Callers should give adequate signals and allow sufficient hookup time. The visitor center, restrooms, a picnic table, and portions of the trail are accessible to wheelchairs. Requests for touching and a sign language interpreter are available on advance notice.

AKE PRIDE AND SAFETY

Ruins walls are fragile and crumble easily if walked upon. Please stay on the paved trail and off the walls. Artifacts, plants, and animals should be left undisturbed. No pets are allowed on the trail. Uneven steps and surfaces, low doorways, dim lighting, and ice or snow on the trail require caution. Wear sturdy walking shoes.

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MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

AZTEC RUINS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Contrary to the name, Aztec Ruins National Monument has nothing to do with the Aztecs of central Mexico. Believing that the Aztec had built the structures here, early Anglo settlers in the Anasazi valley “called” it “Aztec.” The name persisted, even though people archeologists call Anasazi people lived here in the surrounding region. Their descendants, the Pueblo People, live in parts of New Mexico and Arizona today.

Aztec Ruins National Monument was influenced by two centers of Anasazi culture. Sixty-five miles south lay Chaco Canyon. During the 1000’s and 1100’s, Chaco exerted widespread influence as an economic and ceremonial center, covering an area of 25,000-square-mile area of San Juan Basin. By the late 1000’s, Aztec joined many other outlying settlements which exhibited Chacoan style architecture, ceramics, and connecting roads. Their residents participated in what archeologists call the Chacoan Phenomenon, an extensive social and economic system which reached far beyond the canyon walls at Chaco. With the collapse of this system in the mid 1000’s, life changed at Aztec.

A few decades later people culturally akin to the dwellers of the rugged Chaco country found their way north into the area. This second group of people who remodeled the old buildings, using techniques characteristic of the Mesa Verde region. They were farmers and hunters as were the earlier Chacoans, and their ancestors built the great kivas which they moved on, as did other inhabitants of the region.

Why they moved remains unclear. Perhaps drought, depletion of natural resources, and social changes encouraged them to migrate to the better-watered Rio Grande country, and south and west into Arizona. By 1300 the entire region was devoid of the people who had established deep roots in that area. Today, the Pueblo People continue a rich culture that was theirs for centuries, and the ancestors who once occupied this broad expanse.

HIKING AND CAMPING IN MESA VERDE

Mesa Verde is an archaeological preserve. Due to the very fragile nature of the cultural resources, all hiking is restricted to designated trails only. No backcountry hiking or camping is permitted. However, a limited number of short hiking trails (one to seven miles in length) are located near the Museum and the Morefield campground. Check with a park ranger for further hiking information.

The park’s concessionaire, The Mesa Verde Company, operates all food concessions, gift shops, and guided bus tours of the many of the park’s sites. Some of these services are not offered during the winter.

The area is very warm with temperatures occasionally reaching the mid 90’s, but the evenings are very cool, and campers usually resort to sweaters by nightfall. Winters are relatively mild, but vary greatly. The coldest part of the season lasts from late December through early March. Many visitors prefer to see the park in a blanket of winter snow. They claim that it makes them understand more about the people who made these buildings a home. Cross-country skiing is a popular winter activity, and touring is available when conditions permit on the 6-mile Pale Face loop road.

The park’s Morefield campground is one of the largest and most enjoyable campgrounds in the entire National Park System. Located four miles from the entrance, it is the only camping area available in the park. Its 400 sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. A nearby store has gasoline, food items, snack bar, and shower facilities available for campers.

A dump station is available for self-contained travel trailers and motor homes. A few full hook-ups have been provided at an additional charge, but these fill up quickly, especially during the summer season. A large amphitheater is located in the upper portion of the campground. Nightly ranger talks are presented during the summer season.

CONCESSION FACILITIES

The park’s concessionaire, The Mesa Verde Company, manages the campground, a motor lodge, four cafeterias, one fine dining facility, four gift shops, and guided bus tours of many of the park’s sites. Some of these services are not offered during the winter.

The facility is particularly popular and fills to capacity on many summer nights. Please make reservations well in advance at (303) 529-4421 or (303) 533-7371.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

The unscientific removal of archaeological materials and the vandalism of archaeological sites has been prevalent in North America since the arrival of Europeans in the 15th century. We know also that even prehistoric people disturbed and removed artifacts of yet earlier sites. By the 1800s, many of these artifact hunters were commercially motivated. Westward expansion renewed the interest in American Indian cultures, and museum's private collector's increasing demand for artifacts expanded the market.

By the late 1800s, artifact hunting and vandalism had become so severe that supporters of preservation petitioned Congress to enact protective legislation. It was not until 1906 that legislation was passed creating the Antiquities Act (Public Law 34-209). Under the Antiquities Act, the president of the United States could set aside areas as national monuments with sufficient acreage to protect their archaeological or scientific material on land owned or controlled by the federal government.

Although the Antiquities Act provided a legal basis for proscribing offenders, the penalty fines for violations proved to have a reduced economic deterrent effect by the 1970s. At that time, a single artifact could sell for thousands of dollars thus negating the $500 maximum fine. It was definite time for a new law that would specify preservation violations and provide for the certainty of enforcement through increased fines, imprisonment, or both.

On October 31, 1979 President Jimmy Carter signed into law the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, (Public Law 96-95): Title 16 United States Code 470aa-470mm (known as ARPA). This law states: "No person may excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface, or attempt to excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any archaeological resource located on public lands or Indian lands..." It continues stating: "No person may sell, purchase, exchange, transport, receive, or offer to sell, pur chase, or exchange any archaeological resource if such resource was excavated or removed from public lands or Indian lands..." Also: "No person may sell, purchase, exchange, transport, receive, or offer to sell, purchase, or exchange in interstate or foreign commerce, any archaeological resource excavated, removed, sold, purchased, exchanged, transported, or received in violation of any provision, rule, regulation, ordinance, or permit in effect under State or local law."

Under the scope of this law is the protection of all archaeological resources common to this area of the Colorado Plateau, San Juan Basin and Four Corners. These resources are any terrestrial remains of past human life or activities which are of archaeological interest. Included, but not limited to the list of resources are: Pottery, basketry, bottles, weapons, weapon projectiles, tools, structures or portions of structures, pit houses, rock paintings, rock carvings, intaglios, graves, human skeletal materials, or any portion or piece of any of the foregoing items. Any item of 100 years or older also falls into the ARPA protection standards.

Violations of ARPA are felonies and can also carry civil penalties. It is very important to realize the full extent of the protection act and understand the reasons behind it. The material remains of an earlier culture's people are often the only clues archaeologists have upon which to build their theories and ideas. Once artifacts are removed, damaged, or even moved to a different place in the same area, the information they hold is lost forever.

Please enjoy the artifacts, structures, rock paintings and rock carvings as you find them. Photograph, or sketch them where they lie, and let others have the same opportunity to discover and experience the cultural remains of a past civilization.

Protection of these fragile resources is the responsibility of everyone. Report any incidents observed to any uniformed park employee. Inform members of your group of the laws and social responsibilities of protecting these resources. Educate your children and, educate your parents. Be a part of the preservation of these fragile resources for future generations.

TRAVELLING AMONG AMERICAN INDIANS

Welcome to the Southwest. To make your visit among the American Indians more enjoyable, here are some travel tips to remember:

Many visitors enjoy sketching or photographing the people and the land. This may be considered offensive. Permission should be asked before photographing or drawing people or personal property. A fee is often expected.

While traveling among the American Indians, you will notice a lot of difference between the Indian culture and the European-American culture. One such difference is eye contact. To many people eye contact is considered important. Among American Indians eye contact is considered impolite. If you are speaking to a courteous group of American Indians, some may look down or away, even though you may have their full attention.

You may not be successful in striking up a conversation with an American Indian. The general exuberance many cultures define as friendliness is not considered such by the American Indians. From childhood they are taught not to be forward by talking too much or by speaking loudly. Such behavior is considered impolite and you may be seen as a "show off." Likewise, touching is seen differently. Among American Indians it may be reserved for close friends and family, and in other cases may be a sign of disrespect. Usually, the only physical contact you will see is handshaking, and even then a firm grip is interpreted as being overbearing. When shaking hands, a light touch is preferred.

Although there is a striking resemblance to cultural practices, no two tribes are identical. Each one has its own language and culture. What is appropriate clothing for one tribe may not be appropriate for another.

To make your visit an enjoyable one, we recommend contacting the pueblo or tribe's public relations office before visiting and plan accordingly. Visit the Pueblo people, like Zuni of New Mexico or the Hopi living on the mesas, the Ute Mountains or the vast lands of the Navajo.

FOR A SAFE VISIT...

Lock your car and secure your valuables. Thefts from vehicles are a problem at isolated park areas. Report suspicious activity to a Ranger immediately.

Watch your step! Use caution near canyon edges. They present the potential for a serious fall. Please stay away from canyon edges, behind the retaining walls, and control children and pets.

Watch for stock on the highways. Most Indian reservations have an open range policy. Livestock are not fenced in and are frequently encountered on the roads. Obey the speed limits and remain alert for stock, especially after dark.

Summer brings dramatic and picturesque lightning storms to the region. While spectacular, these storms can be dangerous. Remember that lightning is attracted to tall objects, so avoid being in the open along canyon rims in a storm. Stay away from grounded metal objects such as railings and tripods.

No alcoholic beverages. Possessing or consuming alcoholic beverages on almost all Indian reservations is illegal.

Tribal and federal regulations make it a crime to disturb, destroy, injure, deface or remove any natural feature or prehistoric object.

Pets. Park regulations prohibit pets to run at large.

Trails. Stay on designated trails. Trails are subject to closure without notice due to high winds, lightning, snow and ice. Stairways and surfaces are slippery when wet, so exercise extreme caution. No entry on trails after hours.

Do not disturb plants, animals or insects.

Camping. Camp in designated spots only. Fires are permitted only in the grills provided.

Back country hiking. Before you journey into back country areas, be sure to check in with the local Ranger, and be sure to sign in at all trail registers along the route.

Be aware of what time it is. Throughout this region, almost everyone is on Mountain Daylight Time during the summer months. The only exceptions are the state of Arizona and the Hopi Indian Reservation, which remain on Standard Time.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING PARK REGULATIONS

FROM:

TO:

"Explore the Four Corners - See more, Do more, Come back for more!"