



Land of Standing Up Rocks

As you enter Chiricahua National Monument you are climbing up a "sky island"—an isolated mountain range rising above the surrounding grassland "sea." Meadows dotted with cactus and mesquite begin to fill with sycamore, juniper, and oak trees. Farther up are cypress, pine, and fir woodlands. So far the landscape is typical of the basin-and-range topography in this part of the Southwest. It's the rock pinnacles looming over the road like guardians of the forest that announce you're in Chiricahua country.

The Chiricahua Apache called these pinnacles "standing up rocks." Their origins began 27 million years ago when

eruptions from the Turkey Creek Volcano spewed ash over 1,200 square miles (3,100 square km). These super-heated ash particles melted together, forming layers of gray rock called rhyolite. Cooling and subsequent uplifting created joints and cracks in the rhyolite. Eons of weathering by ice wedging and erosion by water enlarged the cracks. Weaker material was washed away leaving behind an endless variety of spires, balanced rocks, and other shapes. This sculpting by the forces of nature continues today. The longer you look, the more alive the formations seem. Many have names; use your imagination to name your own.



Four ecosystems meet in the Chiricahua Mountains. Both Chiricahua National Monument and Mexico's Ajo-Bavispe National Forest Reserve and Wildlife Refuge protect "sky island" habitat. The two sister parks have had a working partnership since 1996.

Chiricahua National Monument was established in 1924 to preserve and protect the pinnacles. In 1934 the Civilian Conservation Corps took on the jobs of improving the road and constructing the trails and many of the structures. The park comprises 11,985 acres (4,794 hectares); 86 percent of this area is designated as wilderness. There are trails for everyone—from the short, wheelchair-accessible nature trail at Massai Point to all-day hikes winding through the formations. The eight-mile scenic drive rises from the grasslands to the summit at Massai Point, where you get a true sense of being atop a "sky island."

Rhyolite formations with Dos Cabezas Mountains in background.
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The Chiricahua Apaches

From the early 1400s southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico have been home to the Chiricahua Apaches (*right*). Of the four main bands, the Chokonen band lived in and around the Chiricahua Mountains.

horses and weapons acquired from the newcomers. After Mexican independence in 1821 and encroachment by settlers and miners, a

state of war existed. Led by Cochise and Geronimo, they raided pioneer settlements but were never able to stem the tide. In

1886 the Chiricahua Apaches surrendered. Ultimately they were settled on reservations in Oklahoma and New Mexico.



They were traditionally nomadic, hunting large game and gathering edible plants. Superb warriors, feared and respected by neighboring tribes, the Apaches fought relentlessly against European colonization beginning with the Spanish in the 1500s. They quickly learned to handle

Faraway Ranch

The peach and green house in Bonita Canyon (*right*) looks as though the door may open any minute, welcoming you for a visit.

Swedish immigrants Neil and Emma Erickson settled here in 1888. By the 1920s their eldest daughter, Lillian, and her husband, Ed Riggs, had turned the homestead into a guest ranch. From 1917 until 1973 visitors came to relax, watch birds, and hike in the hills.

Lillian and Ed built trails and led guests on horseback through

the "Wonderland of Rocks." Armed with photographs and colorful stories, they lobbied for the area's protection.

After the death of the three Erickson children the ranch and its furnishings were incorporated into the park as a historic district.

Faraway Ranch today tells the story of how one family lived on the land, shaped the land, and was in turn shaped by the land.



Civilian Conservation Corps

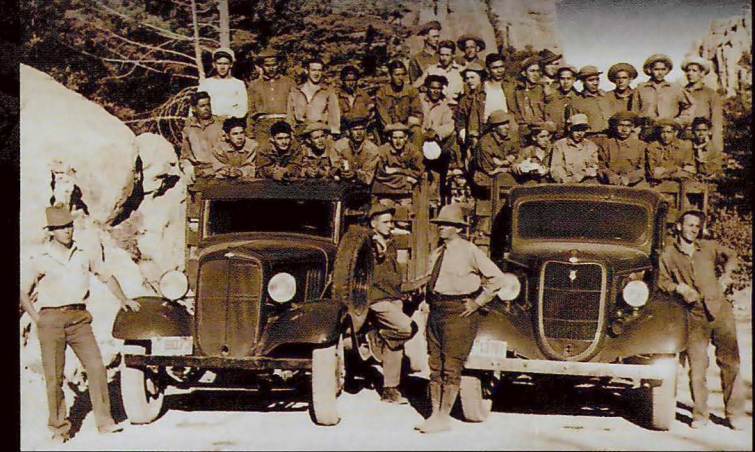
Launched March 31, 1933, as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) enlisted 3.4 million young men hard hit by the Great Depression.

Nicknamed the "Tree Army," its enrollees labored at conservation, construction, and rehabilitation projects in all U.S. states and territories. There were 118 CCC camps in National Park Service areas, including NM-2-A, Company 828 encamped at Chiricahua National Monument (pictured at *right*).

The CCC was more than a job. If you could not read or write you received classroom instruction in camp. You could learn carpentry,

plumbing, surveying, and other skills. Monthly pay was \$30, \$25 of which was sent to your family.

The outbreak of World War II led many CCC workers into military service. The CCC camps were disbanded in 1942.

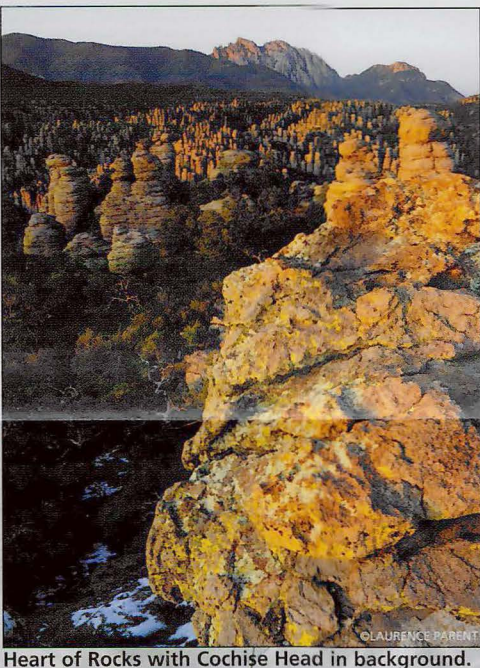




Wild Chiricahua

Rising to 9,763 feet (2,978 meters), the Chiricahua “sky island” is home to some 1,200 species of plants. Species vary according to elevation, exposure to sun, and precipitation. Plants and animals from four ecosystems meet in this range. On cooler northern slopes look for ponderosa pine and Douglas fir, both typical of the Rocky Mountains. Sunny southern slopes have Apache pine and Mexican pinyon pine from Mexico’s Sierra Madre range. Yuccas and sotol from the Chihuahuan Desert coexist with agaves and prickly pear cactus from the Sonoran Desert. Lichens of many colors, including neon green, adorn the pinnacles while ferns thrive in shade.

Birdwatchers flock here for the diversity of birds, including many Mexican species at the northern limit of their range. Or you may spot an elusive coati mundi, an Arizona white-tailed deer, or—found only in these mountains—a Chiricahua fox squirrel. Mountain spiny lizards and black-tailed rattlesnakes are two of the many reptile species.



Heart of Rocks with Cochise Head in background.

Planning Your Visit

Getting to the park Chiricahua National Monument is located 35 miles southeast of Willcox. From I-10, take Ariz. 186 south to Ariz. 181. There is an entrance fee and a separate camping fee. The nearest food service, lodging, and gasoline are in Willcox, Sunizona, and Douglas.

Visitor Center Open daily except December 25, the visitor center has a schedule of activities, exhibits, and an orientation video. Books, maps,

and other materials are available to help you plan your visit.

Scenic Drive Making a gradual climb through oak, cypress, and pine forests, Bonita Canyon Drive winds eight miles to Massai Point.

The overlook has a 360-degree view of Rhyolite Canyon, adjacent valleys, and surrounding mountain peaks. Your return trip is the best time to stop at the roadside pullouts.

Wilderness and Trails Most of the park area is designated wilderness, accessible by foot and horseback, but not mechanized vehicles. Some 17 miles of day-use trails wind through meadows, forest, and rock pinnacles. Check the map below for trail lengths, elevation changes, and degrees of difficulty. Pets on leashes are permitted only on the Silver Spur Meadow and Bonita Creek trails. Ask at the visitor center about the hikers’ shuttle.

Picnic Areas Bonita Creek and Faraway Ranch areas have tables, grills, trashcans, and restrooms. Massai Point, Echo Canyon, and Sugarloaf areas have tables and restrooms. Water is available at Faraway Ranch and the visitor center.

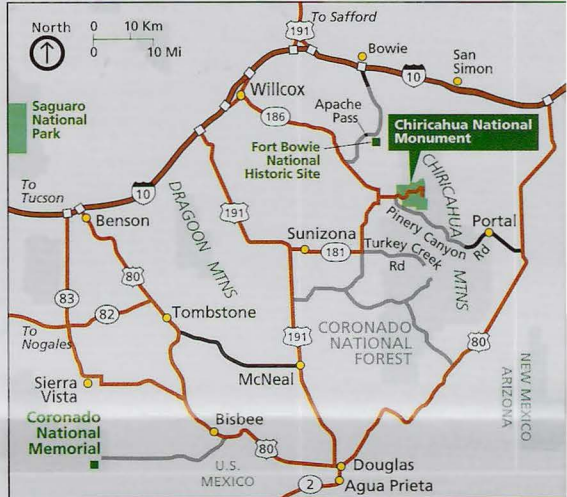
Camping Open year-round on a first-come, first-served basis, the Bonita Canyon Campground has 24 sites for tents, trailers up to 26 feet long, or RVs up to 29 feet

long. Tables, grills, restrooms with flush toilets. No hookups or showers. A fee is charged.

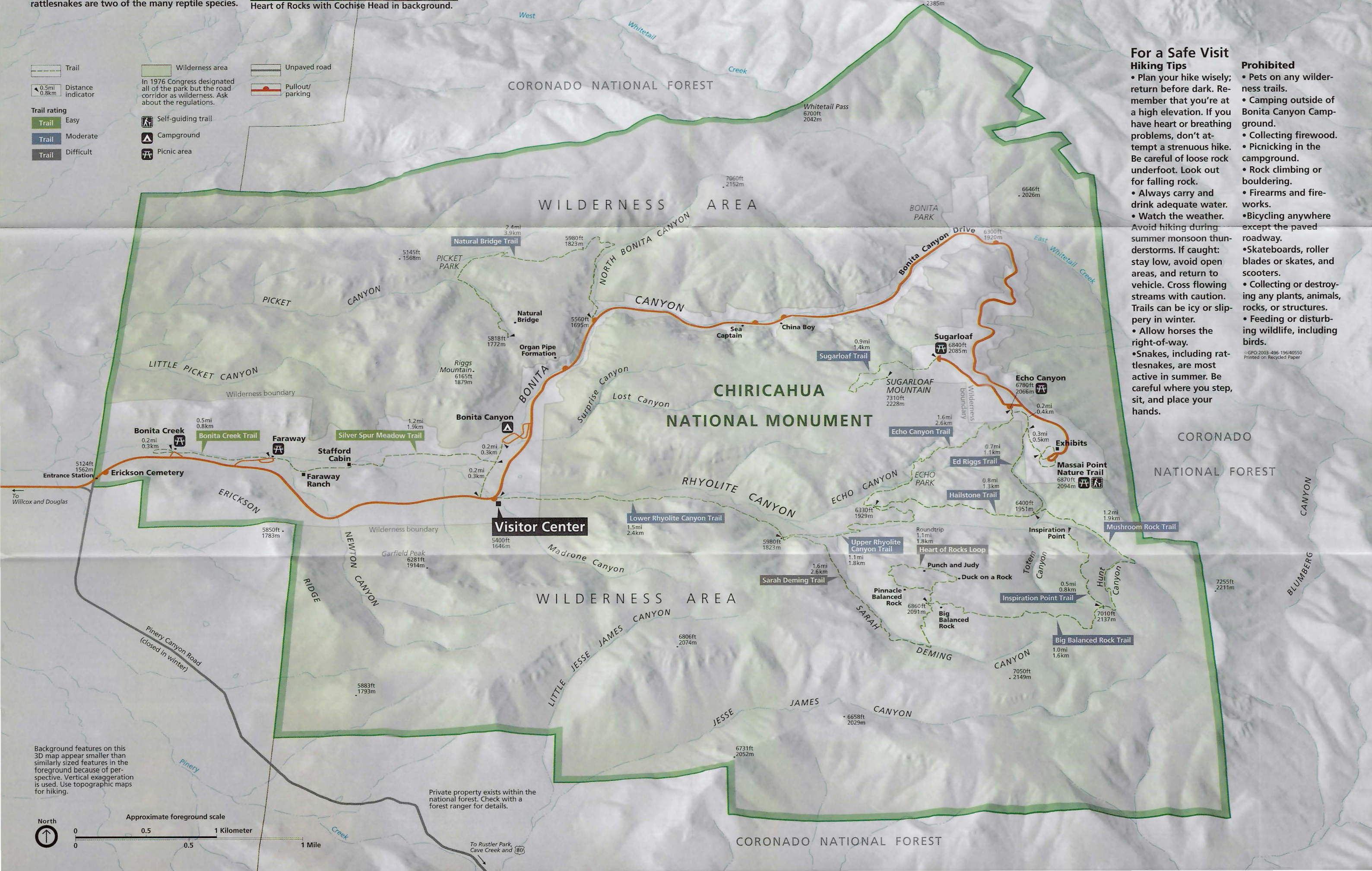
Faraway Ranch and Stafford Cabin Grounds of the ranch and cabin homestead are open year-round; a trail guide is available. Tours of the Faraway Ranch house are conducted as staffing permits. Check at the visitor center for tour information.

More information Chiricahua National Monument is one of more than 380 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. Visit www.nps.gov.

Chiricahua National Monument
13063 East Bonita Canyon Road
Willcox, AZ 85643
520-824-3560
www.nps.gov/chir



• COCHISE HEAD
8113ft
2473m



For a Safe Visit

Hiking Tips

- Plan your hike wisely; return before dark. Remember that you’re at a high elevation. If you have heart or breathing problems, don’t attempt a strenuous hike. Be careful of loose rock underfoot. Look out for falling rock.
- Always carry and drink adequate water.
- Watch the weather. Avoid hiking during summer monsoon thunderstorms. If caught: stay low, avoid open areas, and return to vehicle. Cross flowing streams with caution. Trails can be icy or slippery in winter.
- Allow horses the right-of-way.
- Snakes, including rattlesnakes, are most active in summer. Be careful where you step, sit, and place your hands.

Prohibited

- Pets on any wilderness trails.
- Camping outside of Bonita Canyon Campground.
- Collecting firewood.
- Picnicking in the campground.
- Rock climbing or bouldering.
- Firearms and fireworks.
- Bicycling anywhere except the paved roadway.
- Skateboards, roller blades or skates, and scooters.
- Collecting or destroying any plants, animals, rocks, or structures.
- Feeding or disturbing wildlife, including birds.

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