



# Foundation Document Overview

## Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument

Texas



### Contact Information

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## Purpose



*The purpose of Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument is to provide for the preservation, protection, interpretation, and scientific study of Alibates flint deposits associated with the activities and cultural resources of the indigenous peoples.*



## Significance

Significance statements express why Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Alibates flint is only found in a small section of the Canadian River valley in the Texas panhandle. The national monument contains part of the only known exposed bedrock source of Alibates flint, and the flint is present in the national monument in high concentrations.
- The physical characteristics of the Alibates flint made it highly desirable for tool-making. It is very hard but also glass-like, so it holds an edge and can be worked. Additionally, its distinctive color pattern makes it identifiable even when it is away from the source, so the movement of the flint can be documented.
- Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument contains evidence of more than 13,000 years of lithic resource detection, extraction, manipulation, and use, evidenced in features such as the village site and approximately 700 quarry pits. The national monument was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966.
- An unusually high number and variety of artifacts representing the entire spectrum of flint extraction and manufacturing have been recovered from the national monument, providing opportunities for scientific research and knowledge of aboriginal quarrying techniques. Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, together with Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, manages approximately 748,396 collected objects and archives associated with the area.
- The Plains Village archeological sites in the national monument include the only protected, and best remaining, type-site for the Antelope Creek people, who occupied the area between AD 1150 and 1450. The national monument also contains petroglyphs, which are rare in the Texas panhandle. Together with sites in the adjacent Lake Meredith National Recreation Area, these ruins document a prehistoric sedentary lifestyle.

## Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance. Below are the fundamental resources and values of Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument including the ones shared with Lake Meredith National Recreation Area.

- **Alibates Flint.** The physical characteristics of the flint made it desirable for use in tools by prehistoric peoples. Alibates flint has a distinctive color that makes it very identifiable and easily tracked, such as along trade routes.
- **Alibates Ruin Archeological Site.** This site is the type-site for the Antelope Creek Phase of the Plains Village period and one of only two remaining sites.
- **Quarries.** The more than 700 flint quarries contain evidence of more than 300 years of extraction.
- **Museum Collection.** The extensive collection provides an excellent opportunity for study and research of 13,000 years of human use.
- **Diverse Habitats and Ecological Transition Zones.** The parks have an unusually high diversity of flora and fauna for the region. The parks can be divided into 12 communities that have supported indigenous peoples for 13,000 years.
- **Wide Range of Sites and Artifacts.** The sites and artifacts in both parks document cultural use of the area from Paleoindian hunters and gatherers approximately 13,000 years ago to early ranching operations.
- **Opportunity for Scientific Research.** The unique natural and cultural resources present at both parks provide an opportunity for research.



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- The geologic conditions that occurred here created a unique, hard, fine-grained, multicolored stone that has attracted people for millennia and demonstrates the value that people place on uncommon things.
- The selection and use of Alibates flint for more than 13,000 years by a variety of peoples illustrates the sophistication of early cultures, the crafting of tools to improve quality of life, and that people's basic needs have not changed—only the means to achieve them.
- The ongoing study of Alibates flint and its importance to the lives of those who used it provides insights into the ways that knowledge is acquired, interpreted, updated, shared, and preserved.



# Description

Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument is about 5 miles southwest of Fritch, along the southeastern edge of Lake Meredith National Recreation Area between Bates Canyon and Harbor Bay. The visitor contact station for this NPS unit is in Lake Meredith National Recreation Area outside the national monument boundary. The visitor contact station includes exhibits depicting the lifestyle, history, and culture of the American Indians who occupied the area and quarried the flint outcrops to acquire raw material for tools.

The national monument totals about 1,371 acres, which includes about 292 acres of private inholding, in Potter County, Texas. The national monument shows evidence of human habitation for 13,000 years, and it is noted for the more than 700 flint quarries that were used to provide raw materials for the manufacture of tools and weapons. It also contains the only known remaining village type-site for the Antelope Creek people and a series of petroglyphs.

The dominant landscape features of the national monument are upland hills, ridges, and canyons. There are no water features on the site. Predominant vegetation cover types include yucca grasslands, vegetated cliffs, mixed grasslands, and mesquite grasslands.

Because of the need to protect the resource, access to the national monument is limited to guided tours of the flint quarries. Special guided tours are given during the month of October. Annually, the national monument receives about 3,000 to 4,000 visits. Popular recreation activities include visiting the interpretive facilities at the nearby contact station and attending the guided tours. Peak visitor use occurs from mid-April through mid-June and September through October. There are no camping facilities and hunting is not allowed on the national monument.

Natural resources of special interest include the Texas horned lizard (a state-listed threatened species). Cultural resources of special interest include the flint quarries, petroglyphs, and village ruins.

