

PARK POINT

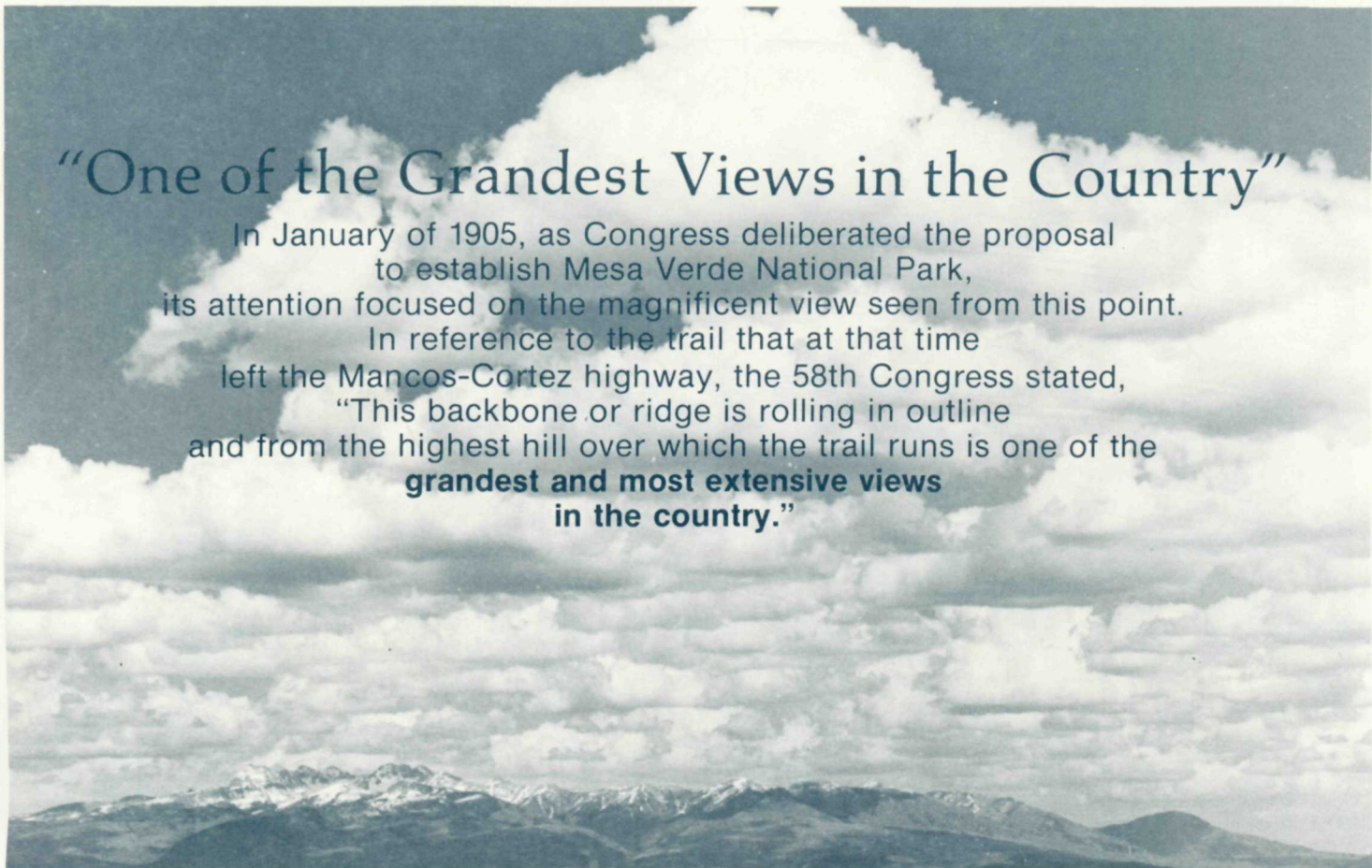
MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

50¢ DONATION
If taken with you

"One of the Grandest Views in the Country"

In January of 1905, as Congress deliberated the proposal to establish Mesa Verde National Park, its attention focused on the magnificent view seen from this point.

In reference to the trail that at that time left the Mancos-Cortez highway, the 58th Congress stated, "This backbone or ridge is rolling in outline and from the highest hill over which the trail runs is one of the **grandest and most extensive views in the country.**"



PARK POINT...



Park Point, the highest elevation on the Mesa, offers an unobstructed 360° panoramic view of the area. Depending on atmospheric conditions, which vary with the amount of manmade contamination, natural haze and time of year, the view in any direction is truly breathtaking. The Park Point area is a particularly favorite spot for park visitors who enjoy drawing, sketching, painting, and photography.



Park Point is surrounded on the north by Mount Wilson and Lone Cone, on the east by the La Plata Range, on the south by the Hogback, Shiprock and Lukachukai Mountains, and on the west by the Montezuma Valley and Sleeping Ute Mountain. In the distance to the northwest one can view the Abajo and Manti-LaSal mountains in Utah. The San Juan mountains and the rugged canyon and mesa country form an outstanding backdrop for the large concentration of prehistoric Pueblo ruins located within the park. These scenic views contribute to the total experience of Mesa Verde and the remnants of the culture that lived here.

NORTH

Please take a short walk up the trail to the lookout and enjoy Park Point's spectacular panoramic view. When it is bright and clear see if you can find these features listed below.

FEATURE	DISTANCE
IN UTAH	
Abajo Mountains	60 miles
Manti-LaSal Mountains .	110 miles
IN COLORADO	
Lone Cone	50 miles
Dolores Peaks	45 miles
Mount Wilson	45 miles

Abajo Mountains





Dolores Peaks and Mount Wilson

The San Juan range forms an outlying group of the Southern Rocky Mountains. These are high, rugged mountains, almost entirely surrounded by lowlands, or plateaus. Mount Wilson, altitude 14,250 feet, Lone Cone and the Dolores Peaks, although separate in a geologic sense, are included as part of the San Juan Mountains. From these western summits one may look for miles across the valleys and see on the horizon the isolated mountains that rise near the Utah-Colorado boundary line - the Abajo, or Blue Mountains, and the Manti-LaSal, or mountain of salt.

Although as a whole the San Juan Mountains are sparsely settled, a number of the mountain towns owe their prosperity to the development of the mineral resources of the region. The adjacent lowland communities are rich in farmland and prosper agriculturally.

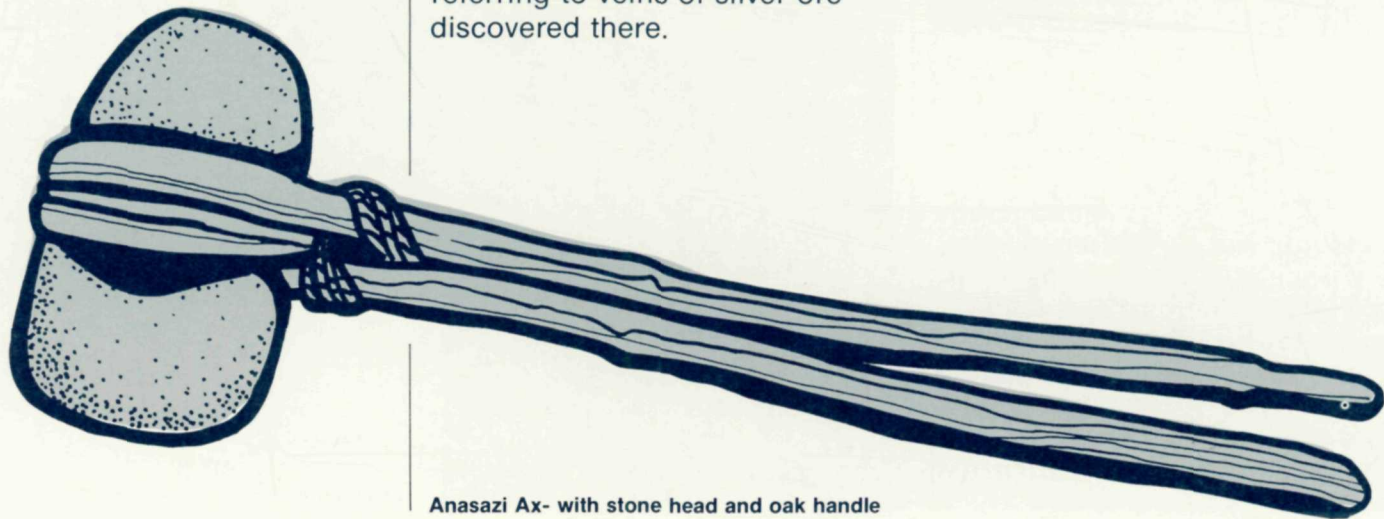


EAST

FEATURE	DISTANCE
IN COLORADO	

La Plata Mountains	15 miles
Mancos Valley	2-10 miles
Menefee Mountain	8 miles

Prior to historic times, wandering bands of hunting and gathering Indians crossed the Mancos Valley into the mountains. The first historic expedition was recorded about 1775, and led by Don Juan Maria de Rivera. This expedition left the first thorough description of the San Juan Basin area and named many of the mountain ranges and rivers. The La Plata Mountain Range was named Sierra de la Plata...or Mountains of Silver, referring to veins of silver ore discovered there.



Anasazi Ax- with stone head and oak handle



The La Plata Mountain Range

SOUTH

FEATURE	DISTANCE
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IN NEW MEXICO

The Hogback 45 miles

Shiprock 32 miles

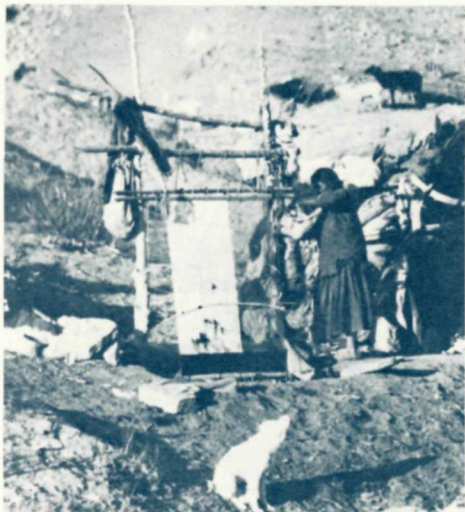
IN ARIZONA

Lukachukai Mountains 75-90 miles

Carrizo Mountains 50 miles

Shiprock





Early 1900's photograph of a Navajo woman with loom, dogs, sheep, and hogan near Shiprock, New Mexico.

Tse - bi - ta - i, or Winged Rock, is a high, sharp pinnacle of dark volcanic rock, rising from a wide plain in the northwestern part of New Mexico. The Navajos liken it to a bird; therefore the name of Winged Rock, or Rock Its Wings. Navajo beliefs say this bird carried their people to the area. Today the rock is known as Shiprock because it resembles a ship with sails set. The very first photograph of Shiprock may have been taken as early as the summer of 1902.



WEST

FEATURE	DISTANCE
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IN COLORADO	
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The Sleeping Ute Mt. ...	13 miles
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Montezuma Valley	1-30 miles
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IN UTAH	
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Manti-LaSal Mountains .	110 miles
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Abajo Mountains	60 miles
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The Sleeping Ute Mountain skyline depicts the image of a man lying on his back. As one looks closely you can see the head to the north and face to the sky. Following to the south the formation indicates folded arms across his chest, then his thighs, knees and toes.



The Sleeping Ute Mountain



Ute Indians

Today the Ute Mountain Indian Reservation borders the park on three sides, and is an integral part of Montezuma County. One Ute legend depicts this formation as one of their gods who, at some remote time . . . became angered with his people, gathered all the rain clouds together in his pockets and laid down on his back and went to sleep. It is said that when the clouds are hanging about the peaks as they often do in times of a storm, that the clouds are slipping out of the rain god's pockets . . . There is further belief that the god will arise some day to lead the Ute Indians.



Cloud cover over the Montezuma Valley



FIRE LOOKOUT

Duties of the Ranger at Park Point

This tower is a fire lookout manned by a National Park Service Ranger during the critical fire season.

The Ranger looks for fires, especially after thunderstorms. The fire check is done with binoculars and unaided eye. Most fires are spotted as columns of smoke, or puffs of smoke. When a "smoke" is spotted by the fire lookout a sighting, or azimuth, is taken with an instrument called an Osborne Firefinder. The Ranger lines up the "smoke" through the sight of the firefinder and reads the compass degree to the fire.

Ranger with Osborne Firefinder





Fire tower at Park Point



To confirm the reading the ranger requests assistance from another tower in the park. This ranger also spots the “smoke” to get a degree reading from the firefinder. The readings are then called into the dispatcher in the Park Ranger’s office and a triangulation is made from which the “smoke” can be located on the map. The “smoke” is called in by description, color, estimated size, wind direction and possible fuels that are burning. The park will then estimate the size of the fire and manpower required for suppression.

The ranger also has the responsibility of projecting weather conditions and the possibility of fire resulting from these conditions.

The National Park Service cooperates with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Land Management to protect the park and surrounding lands from potential wildfires.



Pinon Pine

THE MESA

The mesa for which Mesa Verde National Park is named is an erosional remnant rising 1,500 to 2,000 feet above the surrounding Dolores Plateau. This high tableland is intricately dissected by steep-walled canyons. From Park Point the surface slopes downward to the south into a bowl shaped amphitheater from an elevation of about 8,600 feet to 6,000 feet at the southern end of the park. No active water sources other than springs are present in the park.

Yucca Plant

VEGETATION

The pinyon-juniper vegetation on Mesa Verde is natural to this high arid plateau country of the Southwest. The vegetation in the park, unlike elsewhere, has not been grazed by livestock for nearly forty (40) years. Climax vegetation varies from the gambel oak, grasses, and mountain shrub vegetation to a mature pinyon pine and Utah juniper forest.



Mule Deer

MAMMALS

Large mammals found in Mesa Verde National Park include the mule deer, bighorn sheep and mountain lion. Migrant black bear and coyote have also been observed. A herd of elk has been reported on numerous occasions in School Section Canyon. Birds which permanently nest in the park, or which frequent the park seasonally, number approximately 176 species.



Southern Bald Eagle

ENDANGERED BIRDS

Two endangered bird species and one threatened species are listed for the park.

The “threatened” Southern bald eagle, **Hileaeatus leucocephalus** (Linnaeus), is a rare visitor to the park, having been recorded three times along the northern and eastern park escarpments and one in School Section Canyon.

The “endangered” prairie falcon, **Falco mexicanus** (Schlegel), a rare resident, is thought to be more common than records indicate. It usually is observed along the northern portions of the park.

The “endangered” peregrine falcon, **Falco peregrinus anatum** (Bonaparte), has been observed occasionally along the north escarpment and in Prater and Navajo Canyons.



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FOR YOUR SAFETY

Do not allow your visit to be spoiled by an accident. Efforts have been made to provide for your safety and comfort. Warning signs are placed among the ruins and along trails and walls, but there are still hazards that require your alertness and vigilance. Please exercise common sense and caution.

HELP US PROTECT THIS NATIONAL PARK

Please leave plants, animals, rocks, and other natural and manmade features undisturbed. Under the 1906 Federal Antiquities Act, it is unlawful to appropriate, excavate, injure, or destroy "any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity" on federal lands.

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