



anasazi national monument

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND STUDY OF ALTERNATIVES

April 1989

A Planning Newsletter from the National Park Service

Number 2

The National Park Service is continuing work on the Anasazi National Monument Resource Assessment and Study of Alternatives with assistance from the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Historical Society, and the public. The National Park Service sponsored public workshops in Cortez, Durango, and Denver in March to clarify the purpose of the study and gather additional information.

There has been some confusion about the study and what will happen as a result. The purpose of this study is to

present to Congress a full range of alternatives for commemorating the Anasazi in southwestern Colorado. The National Park Service will not select a preferred alternative. Congress may select one of the alternatives presented, may develop their own alternative, or may choose to do nothing. The following information was presented at the public information workshops and may help to clarify the purpose of the study and what it will accomplish.

THE STUDY IS:

- ♦ An idea document
- ♦ An idea document
- ♦ Conceptual and broad in its approach

THE STUDY IS NOT:

- ♦ A decision or action document
- ♦ A decision or action document
- ♦ Detailed

THE STUDY WILL:

- ♦ Be done quickly
- ♦ Consider pros and cons of alternatives
- ♦ Identify threats to archeological resources
- ♦ Identify existing and potential management and ownership of candidate sites
- ♦ Describe general needs for protection, access to, and public use of sites
- ♦ Provide a full range of alternatives as to what entities could manage, protect, interpret, and plan for the archeological resources

THE STUDY WILL NOT:

- ♦ Be expensive and time consuming
- ♦ Be an environmental document (Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement)
- ♦ Explain how the threats would be mitigated
- ♦ Specify an acquisition program
- ♦ Design specific solutions to meet those needs
- ♦ Present a preferred alternative

Public response to the first newsletter and series of workshops has demonstrated keen interest in telling the Anasazi story in southwest Colorado. More than ninety people attended the Cortez workshop March 14, thirty attended in Durango on March 15, and ten came to the Denver meeting on March 17. Additionally, over 100 written comments have been returned in response to the first newsletter.

This is what we have heard so far:

Of primary concern is the study area's limited size -- southwest Colorado, excluding tribal lands - - instead of the entire Anasazi cultural region, which includes Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. Some people pointed out the importance of continued multiple use on all lands, while others felt that more restrictive National Park Service management is needed to protect archeological sites. Concern was also expressed about potential detrimental impacts of increased visitation at the sites, and some people suggested that sites should be fenced and access should be restricted. Others said they would like to see sites excavated and stabilized for interpretation. There was general consensus that interpretation and education are effective tools in preserving these sites. Many people pointed out that in addition to the sites themselves, sufficient areas surrounding them should also be set aside to serve as protection zones. People attending the Cortez workshop requested that Cortez be considered as a site for a visitor center/area operations facility. They also suggested the historic Wetherill Ranch (also known as Alamo Ranch) in Mancos for possible inclusion in the study. In all three meetings and in the written comments, many people expressed concern that sites not set aside would be considered "unnecessary" or "throw away" sites. They emphasized that each of the Anasazi sites can tell part of the story, and that all sites are important. There is some concern that not enough information is known about the Anasazi to determine which sites are most significant.

Some people questioned if the National Park Service would evaluate the impacts to landowners adjacent to the candidate sites. These impacts include increased traffic, potential land acquisition, and visitor use management. There was some concern about how communities could replace revenue that might be lost if oil and gas production was terminated on some sites.

Participants in the Cortez workshop were enthusiastic about the development of an alternative that would explore a private/public cooperative approach. This would involve the establishment of a commission to coordinate development, promote tourism, and serve as a clearing house for Anasazi research. Technical assistance may be provided by federal agencies similar to the National Park Service involvement in America's Industrial Heritage Project in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Some people are quite concerned about the potential for federal acquisition of large blocks of private land. This perception may be responsible for the increase in archeological site destruction. The NPS responded that sites being evaluated for the study are primarily on existing public and Archeological Conservancy lands and that study alternatives will minimize impacts on private landowners.

Many sites in the study area were evaluated concerning site integrity, interpretive and research potential, and ownership by archeologists and the NPS resulting in the following list of 21 sites. Please note that not all sites will be included in all alternatives.

	P*	FS	BLM	NPS	AC*
Albert Porter					●
Anasazi Archeological District		●			
Ansel Hall	●				
Cannonball			●		
Chimney Rock Archeological District		●			
Durango Rock Shelters		●			
Easter			●		
Escalante Ruins Group			●		
Goodman Point Complex	●		●	●	
Lakeview Site Complex	●				
Lancaster	●				
Lost Canyon Archeological District		●			
Lowry Complex	●		●		
McLean Basin Towers			●		
Mitchell Springs	●				
Mud Springs					●
Reservoir Ruins Group		●			
Sand Canyon, East Rock Canyon (Sand Canyon Pueblo)			●		
Spring Creek Archeological District		●			
Yellowjacket Complex	●				●
Yucca House				●	

P* = Private

AC* = Archeological Conservancy

NPS planners and representatives of the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, and Colorado Historical Society are using what they learned from the workshops and newsletter responses to develop a full range of alternatives for commemorating the Anasazi. These alternatives and supporting rationale will be completed and forwarded to the NPS Washington office by September 30, 1989. The alternatives will be reviewed, sent to the Office of Management and Budget, and forwarded to Congress.

The alternatives will be also be shared with the public in a newsletter and through the media by early fall. No additional public workshops by the National Park Service are anticipated.

If you have additional comments you would like the planning team to consider in developing the alternatives, please write to Robert Heyder, Superintendent, Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado 81330.