



El Morro National Monument © NPS

FACT SHEET

National Parks in New Mexico

Aztec Ruins National Monument • Bandelier National Monument • Capulin Volcano National Monument • Carlsbad Caverns National Park • Chaco Culture National Historical Park • El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail • El Malpais National Monument • El Morro National Monument • Fort Union National Monument • Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument • Old Spanish National Historic Trail • Pecos National Historical Park • Petroglyph National Monument • Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument • Santa Fe National Historic Trail • White Sands National Monument

Cliff dwellings of native peoples are preserved alongside trails that brought settlers into the West in national parks in New Mexico. Signatures of Spanish and American travelers are carved into the sandstone of El Morro among petroglyphs left behind by the native Pueblo people.

Aztec Ruins National Monument - Preserves structures and artifacts of Ancestral Pueblo people through 1200s. People associated with Chaco Canyon to the south built and used the structures, then people related to the Mesa Verde region to the north used the site in 1200s.

Bandelier National Monument - Best known for the mesas, sheer-walled canyons, and the ancestral Pueblo dwellings found among them, Bandelier also includes over 23,000 acres of designated Wilderness. It was named for Adolph Bandelier, a 19th-century anthropologist. Proclaimed a February 11, 1916. Acreage: 32,737, all federal.

Capulin Volcano National Monument - Approximately 60,000 years ago, the rain of cooling cinders and four lava flows formed Capulin Volcano, a nearly perfectly-shaped cinder cone, rising more than 1,000 feet above the surrounding landscape. Although long extinct, Capulin Volcano is dramatic evidence of the volcanic processes that shaped northeastern New Mexico.

Carlsbad Caverns National Park - Established to preserve Carlsbad Cavern and numerous other caves within a Permian-age fossil reef, the park contains 100 known caves, including Lechuguilla Cave—the nation’s deepest limestone cave at 1,567 feet (478m) and third longest. Carlsbad Cavern has one of the world’s largest underground chambers and countless formations.



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Chaco Culture National Historical Park - Chaco Canyon was a major center of ancestral Puebloan culture between AD 850 and 1250. Chaco is remarkable for its monumental public and ceremonial buildings, and its distinctive architecture. The Chacoan people combined pre-planned architectural designs, astronomical alignments, geometry, landscaping, and engineering to create an ancient urban center of spectacular public architecture.

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail - Recognizes the primary route between the colonial Spanish capital of Mexico City and the Spanish provincial capitals at San Juan de Los Caballeros (1598-1600); San Gabriel (1600-1609); and Santa Fe (1610-1821). The national historic trail extends 404 miles from El Paso, Texas, to San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico.

El Malpais National Monument - Established in 1987. This monument preserves 114,277 acres of which 109,260 acres are federal and 5,017 acres are private. El Malpais means "the badlands" but contrary to its name this unique area holds many surprises, many of which researchers are now unraveling. Volcanic features such as lava flows, cinder cones, pressure ridges and complex lava tube systems dominate the landscape.

El Morro National Monument - Rising 200 feet above the valley floor, this massive sandstone bluff was a welcome landmark for weary travelers. A reliable waterhole hidden at its base made El Morro (or Inscription Rock) a popular campsite. Beginning in the late 1500s Spanish, and later, Americans passed by El Morro. While they rested in its shade and drank from the pool, many carved their signatures, dates, and messages. Before the Spanish, petroglyphs were inscribed by Ancestral Puebloans living on top of the bluff over 700 years ago. Today, El Morro National Monument protects over 2,000 inscriptions and petroglyphs, as well as Ancestral Puebloan ruins.

Fort Union National Monument - Established in 1851 by Lieutenant Colonel Edwin V. Sumner as a guardian and protector of the Santa Fe Trail. During its forty-year history, three different forts were constructed close together. The third and final Fort Union was the largest in the American Southwest, and functioned as a military garrison, territorial arsenal, and military supply depot for the southwest.

Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument - Offers a glimpse of the homes and lives of the people of the Mogollon culture who lived in the Gila Wilderness from the 1280s through the

early 1300s. The surroundings probably look today very much like they did when the cliff dwellings were inhabited. It is surrounded by the Gila National Forest and lies at the edge of the Gila Wilderness, the nation's first designated wilderness area.

Old Spanish National Historic Trail - Evolved in the early 1800s as a combination of the indigenous footpaths, early trade and exploration routes, and horse and mule routes used by traders between New Mexico and California.

Pecos National Historical Park - Pecos preserves 12,000 years of history including the ancient pueblo of Pecos, two Spanish Colonial Missions, Santa Fe Trail sites, 20th-century ranch history of Forked Lightning Ranch, and the site of the Civil War Battle of Glorieta Pass.

Petroglyph National Monument - Stretches 17 miles along Albuquerque's West Mesa, a volcanic basalt escarpment that dominates the city's western horizon. Petroglyph National Monument protects a variety of cultural and natural resources including five volcanic cones, hundreds of archeological sites and an estimated 25,000 images carved by native peoples and early Spanish settlers. Many of the images are recognizable as animals, people, brands and crosses; others are more complex.

Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument - Early in the 17th-century Spanish Franciscans found the area ripe for their missionary efforts. However, by the late 1670s the entire Salinas District, as the Spanish had named it, was depopulated of both Indian and Spaniard. What remains today are austere yet beautiful reminders of this earliest contact between Pueblo Indians and Spanish Colonials: the ruins of four mission churches, at Quarai, Ab , and Gran Quivira and the partially excavated pueblo of Las Humanas or, as it is known today, Gran Quivira.

Santa Fe National Historic Trail - Between 1821 and 1880, the Santa Fe Trail was primarily a commercial highway connecting Missouri and Santa Fe, New Mexico. The trail was also used by stagecoach lines, thousands of gold seekers heading to the California and Colorado gold fields, adventurers, fur trappers, and emigrants. In 1880, the railroad reached Santa Fe and the trail faded into history.

White Sands National Monument - Great wave-like dunes of gypsum sand have engulfed 275 square miles of desert and have created the world's largest gypsum dune field. The brilliant white dunes are ever changing: growing, cresting, then slumping, but always advancing. Slowly but relentlessly the



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sand, driven by strong southwest winds, covers everything in its path. White Sands National Monument preserves a major portion of this gypsum dune field, along with the plants and animals that have successfully adapted to this constantly changing environment.

Key Issues Facing National Parks in New Mexico

Taking care of America's national parks should be a national priority. With the 100th birthday of the National Park System approaching in 2016, it is more important than ever to address the ongoing problems that our parks are facing. The National Park Service is suffering from an operations funding shortfall now exceeding \$800 million annually. In addition, several billion dollars are needed to protect archaeological sites and historic buildings, and repair the extensive backlog of maintenance projects. Many park friends in Congress have spent years highlighting the fiscal crisis in America's national parks. The Administration has responded with a budget request for 2008 that would increase the National Park Service operating budget by \$258 million - a strong step in restoring our parks and improving the experiences of visitors. This budget also launches the National Park Centennial Challenge, which if properly framed and enacted could help restore the parks for their 100th birthday and for generations to come. In addition to the operational shortfall, the National Park Service has a \$1.9 billion land acquisition backlog consisting of over 11,000 tracts of land and covering more than 1.8 million acres. In many instances, failure to acquire these lands makes operating the parks more complex and costly. Unfortunately, funding for national park federal land acquisition has declined dramatically in recent years, from \$130 million five years ago, to only \$23 million in the fiscal year 2008 request.

- Chaco Culture National Historical Park's experienced restoration experts are retiring and the park has insufficient funding to hire qualified, full-time staff to replace them. The park struggles to meet visitor demand for interpretive services, and worries about the potential strain

of increased visitation.

- Fort Union National Historic Site currently lacks sufficient staff to give the public the necessary experience to completely understand the park and its history. Two additional interpretative staff members would allow the park to increase educational outreach to local schools and to run the interpretive program. The site also needs to expand its administrative offices, as its present size is barely adequate to cover current staffing levels.
- Capulin Volcano National Monument needs to make structural changes to and improve visual elements in its visitors center in order to better serve the public. However, at current funding levels, they are unable to do so. The park would also like to increase its outreach to area public schools, encouraging and supporting visits to the site in order to educate children about this part of New Mexico's history.
- Additional funding would allow Carlsbad Caverns to hire four additional seasonal interpreters. This would allow for more project time for staff to prepare and enable the park to increase the experiences available to visitors.

Park Visitation in New Mexico

In fiscal year 2005, the national parks in New Mexico welcomed 1,652,609 visitors.

Budget Information

In fiscal year 2006, the operations funding for the 16 national parks in New Mexico was \$20.5 million. For fiscal year 2008, the Administration is proposing a 10 percent increase, which would bring operations funding to \$22.5 million.

Contact Information

For more information on the national parks in New Mexico, please contact NPCA Regional Director David Nimkin at 801-521-0785 or NPCA Legislative Director Blake Selzer at 202-223-6722, ext. 250.

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NPS Unit	FY03 Enacted	FY04 Enacted	FY05 Enacted	FY06 Enacted	FY07 Estimate	FY08 Requested	Change FY06-FY08	% Change FY06-FY08
Aztec Ruins NM	821	960	1,013	1,039	1,066	1,180	141	13.6
Bandelier NM	2,492	2,491	2,549	2,705	2,795	2,987	282	10.4
Capulin Volcano NM	611	609	651	664	679	728	64	9.6
Carlsbad Caverns NP	5,248	5,231	5,343	5,472	5,600	5,878	406	7.4
Chaco Culture NHP	1,918	1,764	1,950	1,864	1,902	1,968	104	5.6
El Malpais NM	1,044	1,041	1,116	1,144	1,177	1,479	335	29.3
El Morro NM	560	558	672	683	694	893	210	30.7
Fort Union NM	676	674	773	869	807	946	77	8.9
Gila Cliff Dwellings NM	217	216	370	373	378	388	15	4.0
Pecos NHP	1,299	1,291	1,324	1,453	1,479	1,526	73	5.0
Petroglyph NM	1,605	1,597	1,478	1,509	1,539	1,626	117	7.8
Salinas Pueblo Missions NM	1,205	1,201	1,234	1,273	1,311	1,367	94	7.4
White Sands NM	1,356	1,351	1,387	1,418	1,448	1,591	173	12.2
All New Mexico Parks				20,466		22,557	2,091	10.2

All dollar amounts in thousands



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