During high temperatures, bring plenty of water, a hat, bug spray and sunscreen. Watch for cactus where you step, and be careful of rattle-snakes. On hot days snakes will be in shady areas; on cool days they will be out in the sun.

Please leave the site and its archaeological remains in place - **IT IS THE LAW!** Picking up and taking even a small piece of pottery with you is illegal, and can mean that important scientific information is lost. Please leave the site as you found it so that it can be enjoyed by future visitors.

Also remember to carry out any trash you bring - **LEAVE NO TRACE** of your visit to your remarkable public lands.

El Malpais National Conservation Area
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 846
Grants, New Mexico 87020
(505) 280-2918
www.blm.gov/nm
or
Northwest New Mexico Visitor Center
1900 East Santa Fe Avenue
Grants, New Mexico 87020
(505) 876-2783
www.nps.gov/elma

In case of emergency:
BLM Rio Puerco Law Enforcement – 505/761-8700
Immediate Emergency – 911
BLM 24-hour Santa Fe Law Enforcement – 505/827-9377

Leave No Trace™
Center for Outdoor Ethics | LNT.org

BLM/NM/GI-002-006-1220

NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

The Dittert Site

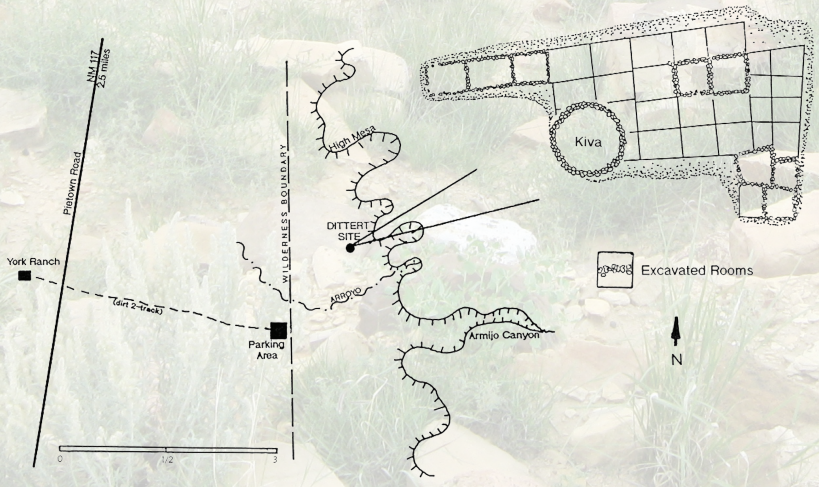
El Malpais

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Sometime between A.D. 1000 and 1300, the Dittert Site was built and occupied by the Anasazi people. They were the ancestors of modern Pueblo Indian people. The ruin is an L-shaped masonry structure that was originally two stories high and consisted of 30-35 rooms and a kiva. The site was named after Alfred "Ed" Dittert Jr. who along with R.J. Ruppe Jr. excavated it between 1947 and 1949. The two men recorded eight rooms and the kiva.

All the rooms were built close together, with the kiva incorporated into the building. The walls are made of compound masonry with "pecked" sandstone (worked by hand so the rocks are uniform). The Dittert Site is one of more than 60 sites in the Armijo Canyon area. These sites clearly form a community in which the Dittert Site was probably central.

Is the Dittert Site a Chacoan Outlier?
Between about A.D. 950 and 1150, Chaco Canyon was an important place for the Anasazi people. Chaco's influence spread throughout the "four corners" region (northwestern New Mexico, southwestern Colorado, southeastern Utah and northeastern Arizona). The Chaco Canyon culture had many "outlier" communities, usually with a "great house" (an unusually large building with more than one story and many rooms) and a kiva that was built within the block of rooms. These communities often had associated roads and very large kivas called "Great Kivas." The communities in El Malpais resemble those of Chaco Canyon with scattered 2- to 6-room masonry houses and a great house. The Dittert Site has a Chacoan appearance with large rooms, a blocked-in kiva, two roads (networked to the larger Chacoan communities), and an unroofed Great Kiva nearby. The architecture resembles that of Casamero Ruin, a Chacoan outlier that is located 60 miles to the north. In spite of these similarities, Dittert's excavations indicated the site was built on the mound of an earlier ruin. The roof beams he excavated dated to the 1200s, long after the Chacoan system was dissolved. The question still remains unanswered "Was this site reoccupied and remodeled 100 years after the Anasazi abandoned Chaco Canyon?"

What Happened to the People?
Dittert's survey indicated the area experienced a period of explosive population growth. During this period, erosion and arroyo formation began. Crop fields would have been destroyed by flash floods. Tree-ring studies dating from A.D. 1250 to 1300 show that the area experienced drought conditions that would have caused crop failures year after year. These hard conditions led the occupants to abandon
the Dittert Site. After abandonment the site showed signs that the occupants intended to return. Roofs were still intact, rooms were not burned and the furniture was left in place. However, no one ever returned. The people who left this site probably moved east to join Acoma Pueblo. Present-day Acoma people consider Dittert an important ancestral site.

When You Visit
The ruin can sometimes be difficult to find, there is no established trail that leads directly to the site. Follow the map or use these coordinates: N 34°39.552, W 107°58.332. The elevation of the site is 7284 ft.