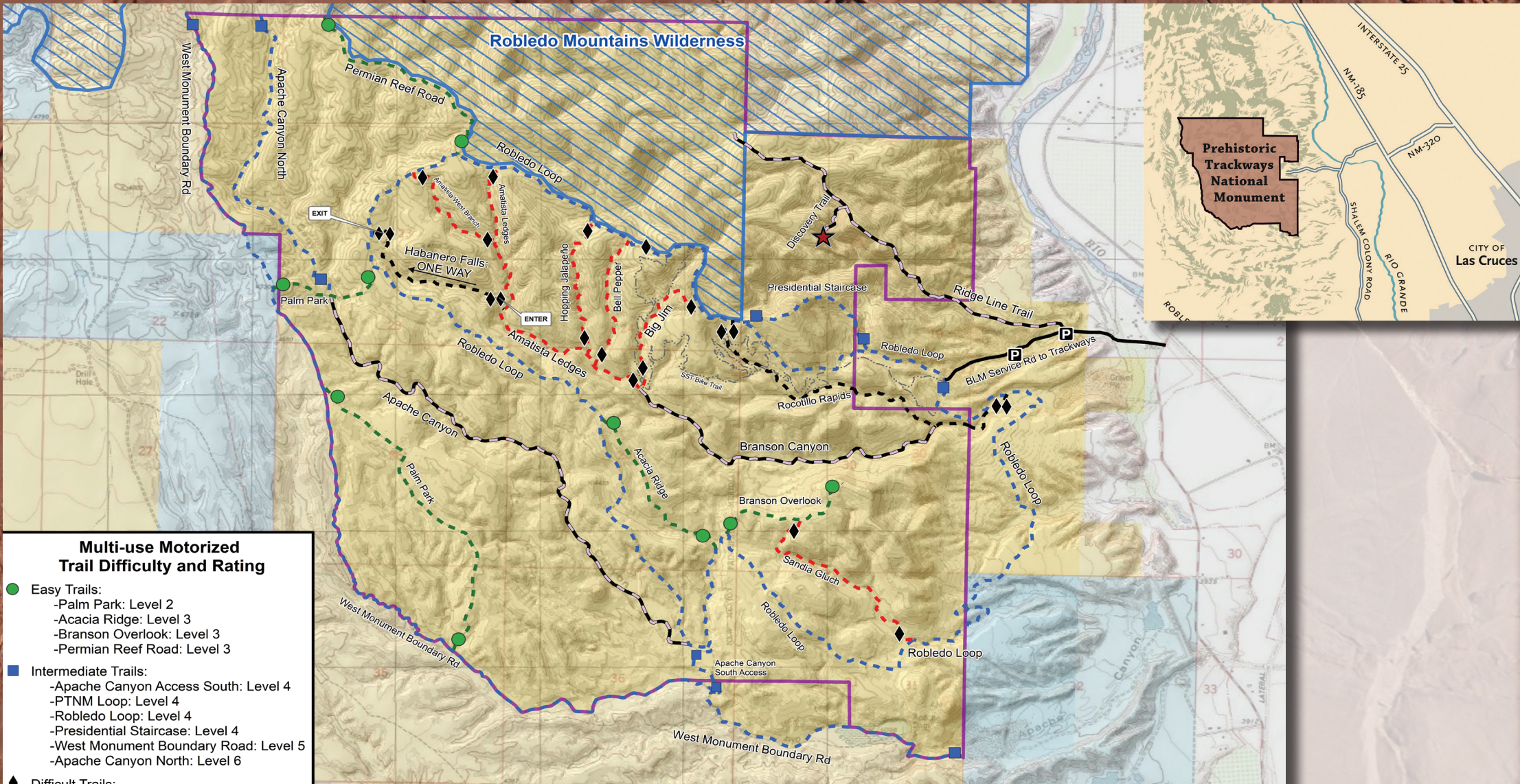


# Prehistoric Trackways

National Monument

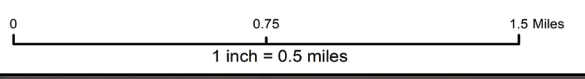


- ### Multi-use Motorized Trail Difficulty and Rating
- Easy Trails:
    - Palm Park: Level 2
    - Acacia Ridge: Level 3
    - Branson Overlook: Level 3
    - Permian Reef Road: Level 3
  - Intermediate Trails:
    - Apache Canyon Access South: Level 4
    - PTNM Loop: Level 4
    - Robledo Loop: Level 4
    - Presidential Staircase: Level 4
    - West Monument Boundary Road: Level 5
    - Apache Canyon North: Level 6
  - ◆ Difficult Trails:
    - Bell Pepper: Level 7
    - Sandia Gulch: Level 7
    - Amatista Ledges: Level 8
    - Big Jim: Level 8
    - Hopping Jalapeño: Level 8
  - ◆◆ Extreme Trails:
    - Habanero Falls: Level 10 (ONE WAY)
    - Rocotillo Rapids: Level 10

BLM GIS  
Las Cruces District Office

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by the BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information is subject to change without notification.

## Prehistoric Trackways Recreation Trail System



- ★ Discovery Site
- P Parking
- Recreation Trails**
  - Easy Multi-use Motorized
  - Intermediate Multi-use Motorized
  - Difficult Multi-use Motorized
  - Extreme Multi-use Motorized
  - Multi-use Non-motorized
  - Multi-use Non-mechanized
- Wilderness Areas
- ▭ Prehistoric Trackways Boundary

BLM/NM/PL-20/005+1711

Bureau of Land Management  
Las Cruces District Office  
1800 Marquess Street  
Las Cruces, NM 88005-3371  
575-525-4300  
or  
[www.blm.gov/new-mexico](http://www.blm.gov/new-mexico)  
In case of emergency:  
Immediate Emergency – 911  
BLM 24-hour Dispatch – 1-800-637-9152

### Directions

**Coming from the North (I-25):** At the Doña Ana Exit, from NM320 (Thorpe Road), go west to US 185, then go north approximately 1/2 mi to Shalem Colony Road. Turn west on Shalem Colony Road. Turn right on Rocky Acres Trail, past the Rio Grande. Go approximately 1/4 mile on Rocky Acres Trail. Then, turn left onto Permian Tracks Road. Cross over a cattle guard and continue to the west. Beyond the first mile, the road is passable only with high clearance 4WDs.

**Coming from the South (Las Cruces):** Travel on Picacho Ave./Hwy. 70. At the stop light at Shalem Colony Road, head north on Shalem Colony Road for approximately 5.5 miles. Prior to reaching the Rio Grande, you will reach Rocky Acres Trail. Turn west on Rocky Acres Trail. Go west 1/4 mile to Permian Tracks Road on the left. Cross over a cattle guard and continue to the west. Beyond the first mile, the road is passable only with high clearance 4WDs.

Welcome to The Prehistoric Trackways National Monument. The Monument was established in 2009 to conserve, protect, and enhance the unique and nationally important paleontological, scientific, educational, scenic, and recreational resources and values of the Robledo Mountains in southern New Mexico. The Monument includes a major deposit of Paleozoic Era fossil footprint megatracks within approximately 5,280 acres.

The trackways include footprints of numerous amphibian-like early tetrapods, lizard-like reptiles, and stem-mammals, as well as insects, arachnids, plants and petrified wood. These date back to the Early Permian Period about 286 million years ago, and collectively provide new opportunities to understand extinct animal behaviors and environments from a time predating the dinosaurs. The trace fossils found



in the monument represent one of the most well-preserved, diverse, and scientifically important Early Permian track sites in the world.

There are opportunities for biking, hiking, horseback riding, and off-highway vehicle driving in portions of the monument. At this time, there are no developed sites for interpreting the fossils. However, there are numerous opportunities throughout the year to observe these delicate and hidden fossils. To preserve them for ongoing and future scientific study, some trackways have been removed and are now curated at the Federal fossil repository at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science in Albuquerque, making up the Jerry MacDonald Paleozoic Trackways Collection. Locally, the trackways may be viewed at the Las Cruces Museum of Nature and Science and on guided hikes.



### Know Before You Go

Prehistoric Trackways is a unique natural wonder. Every turn can bring new adventure to visitors, however, it can also be a challenging desert landscape. When planning your travels, make sure you are prepared for any circumstance and are aware of the special rules of the area. Here are a few tips for your adventurer!

- Drink plenty of water. Since the body loses fluids quickly in a desert environment, carry plenty of water and high energy snacks.
- Wear proper clothing and sun protection. A good pair of walking or hiking shoes is recommended. Carry a jacket even in the summer.
- Check the weather. Be prepared for drastic changes in the weather. Summer days can bring intense heat.

- Watch for rattlesnakes and sharp vegetation.
- Make sure to follow Leave No Trace principles.
- Do not drive off designated routes.
- Keep dogs on a leash, they must be kept under control during your visit.

- Target shooting is prohibited.
- The Community Pit is dangerous. Do not enter.
- DO NOT COLLECT or damage the paleontological resources. In order to protect the paleontological resources, Prehistoric Trackways National Monument is closed to casual collection. A scientific permit, authorized by the BLM, is required for the collection of ANY of the paleontological resources in the Monument.

### Early Permian

In the Early Permian Period – a time tens of millions of years before the dinosaurs and hundreds of millions of years before humans – Las Cruces, New Mexico was near the equator along the coast of a shallow tropical seaway on the western shores of the supercontinent Pangea.

At the time, a forest of early conifer trees grew on a wide floodplain that dominated the landscape. Animals ranging in size from small beetles and millipedes to the large apex predator Dimetrodon traversed the landscape, leaving their footprints in the soft muds and silts.

Over time, these tracks were covered in more silt and mud, preserving a snapshot of this Early Permian ecosystem. Tectonic shifts raised and lowered the sea levels, inundating the land with water.

Limestones and shales left from this time are full of marine life: shelled brachiopods, bivalves, snails, sea urchins and coral.

