



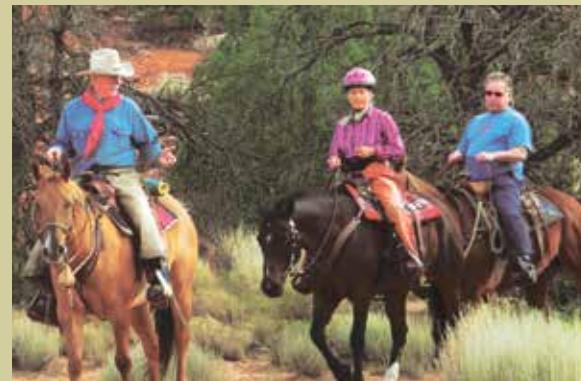
NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

# Sand Canyon & Rock Creek Trails

## Canyons of the Ancients National Monument



© Kim Gerhardt



### Ernest Vallo, Sr. Eagle Clan, Pueblo of Acoma:



*When we come to a place like Sand Canyon, we pray to the ancestral people. As Indian people we believe the spirits are still here.*

*We ask them for our strength and continued survival, and thank them*

*for sharing their home place. In the Acoma language I say, "Good morning. I've brought my friends. If we approached in the wrong way, please excuse our ignorance."*

### Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center & Museum

27501 Highway 184,  
Dolores, CO 81323  
Tel: (970) 882-5600

#### Hours:

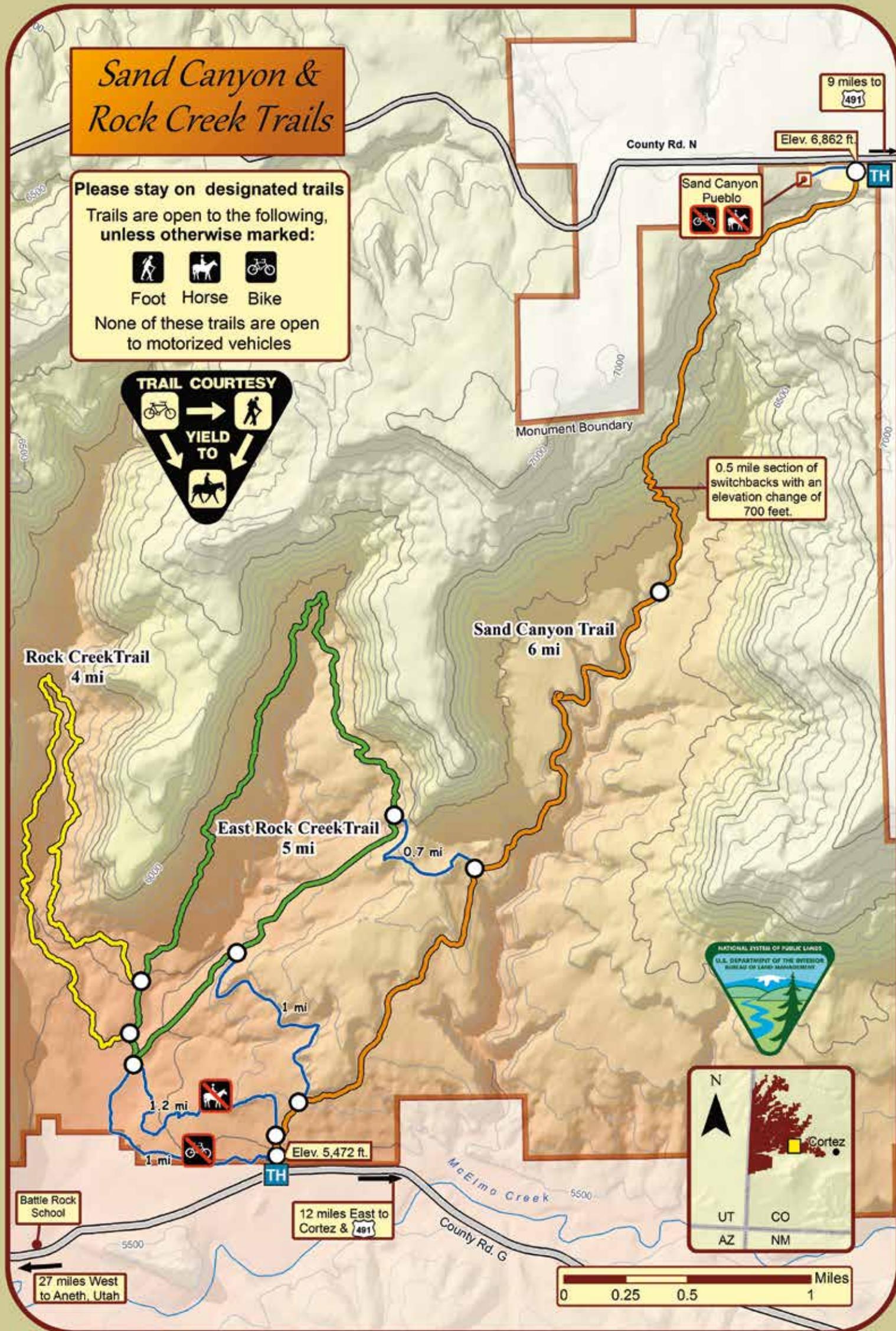
9-5 Summer Mar.- Oct.  
10-4 Winter Nov.- Feb.

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/colorado/canyons-of-the-ancients>

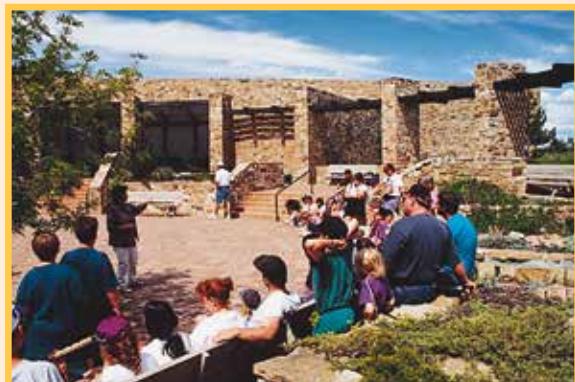
A public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management.



# Please Stay on Designated Trails



**Canyons of the Ancients** National Monument was created to protect cultural and natural resources on a landscape scale. It is part of the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System and includes almost 171,000 acres of public land. The Sand Canyon and Rock Creek Trails are open for hiking, mountain biking, or horseback riding on designated routes only. Most of the Monument is backcountry.



Visitors to Canyons of the Ancients are encouraged to start at the **Visitor Center and Museum** near Dolores, Colorado, where they can get current information about the Monument and experience the museum's exhibits, films, and hands-on discovery area.

## MULTI-USE TRAIL

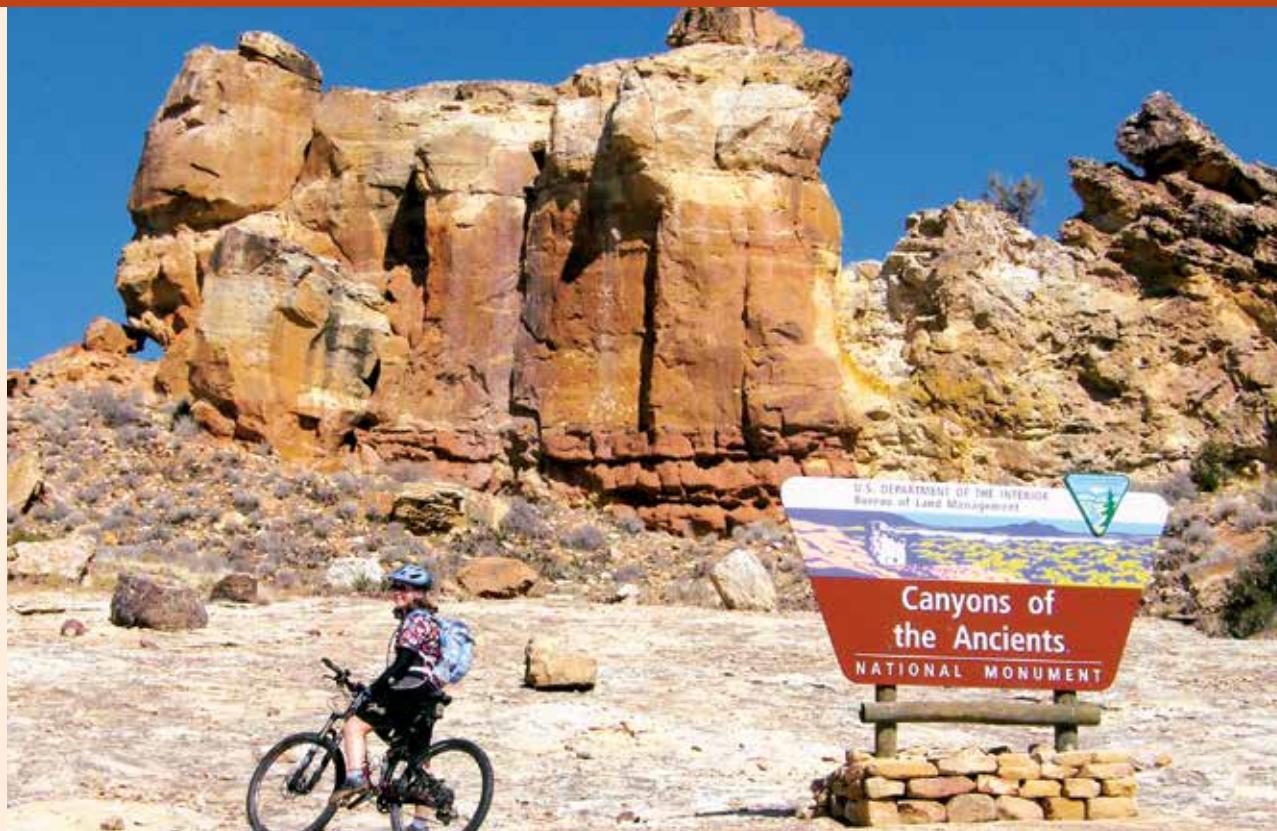


### Please follow these Simple Rules:

- Stay on the Designated Trail.
- Don't enter structures, climb on walls, take or move artifacts, or touch rock art.
- Leave No Trace. Collect nothing and leave what you see for others to enjoy.
- East Rock Trail archaeological sites are too fragile for public access.
- Only archaeological sites on the main Sand Canyon Trail are designated for visitation.
- No Camping



RESPECT artwork by Battlerock School student "Tylor H." age 11



## Mountain Biking Tips from local rider Dani Gregory:

- *Hikers and bikers are supposed to stop for equestrians. People who don't have horses may not understand how bikes can spook horses.*
- *Stay on the trail—keep it a single track.*
- *Sand Canyon is not a beginner trail. If you just got your bike, I don't recommend it. Hike it first. It has a high endurance price tag.*
- *Ride with caution, like you don't know what's around the corner.*
- *If the trail is too muddy, don't go. It will damage the trail and ruin your ride. The ruts will be there all year.*
- *For spur trails, get off your bike and leave it on the main trail.*

## Hiking Tips

- *This place isn't a casual walk in the park. Don't even think of wearing city shoes or wandering off without water.*
- *The switchback portions of the trail rise 700 feet in less than half a mile. It is very rocky and steep and not a good choice for most folks.*
- *For a less visited area, try the upper trail below Sand Canyon Pueblo and above the switchbacks. It's a hike in the pinyon and juniper forest rather than a walk in the canyon.*



© Jerry Simiz

## David Sanders Park Ranger, Canyons of the Ancients:



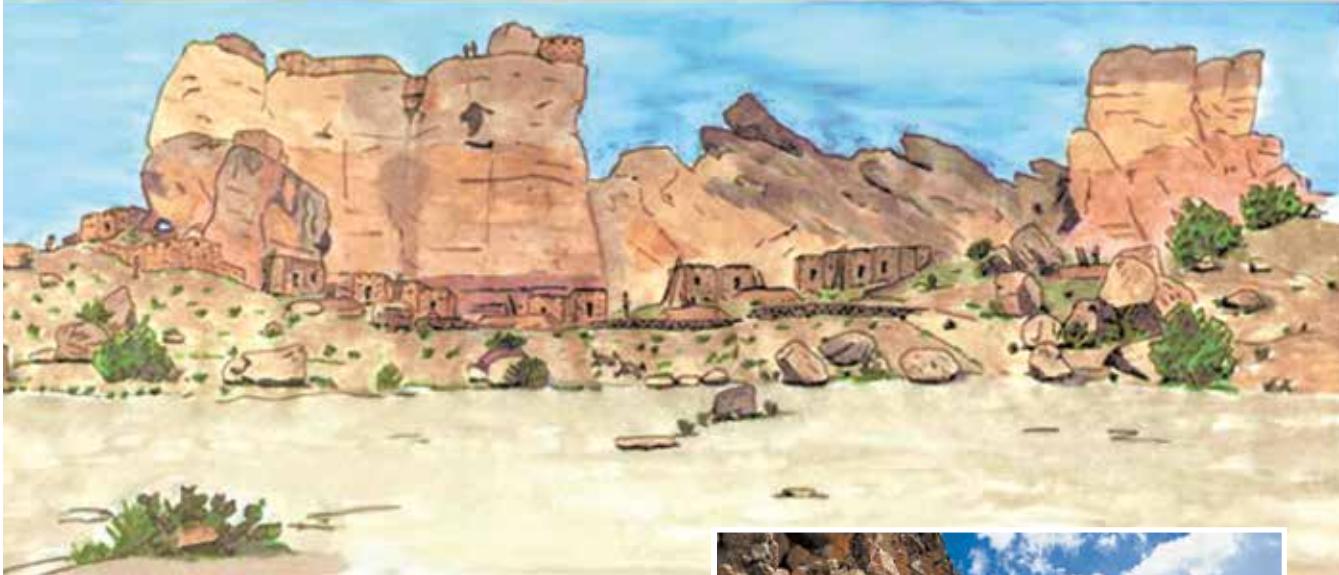
© Diana Donohue

- *All it takes is for one person to ride or walk off trail. Many others will follow and cause damage.*
- *Parking is very limited at the South Trailhead. For your safety please don't park on private property or along the county road.*



## Horseback Riding Tips

- *Parking is limited*
- *Beware of other trail users (bicycles, hikers and hikers with pets)*
- *Please stay on main trail; Soil crusts and trailside vegetation are fragile*
- *Spur Trails: Dismount and leave horse at main trail*
- *Always practice Leave No Trace*



Artist's reconstruction of Castle Rock Pueblo by Paul Ermigiotti

## Castle Rock Pueblo

**Castle Rock Pueblo** was built and occupied from the AD 1250s to the 1280s. The village is contemporary with the seven small cliff dwellings along the lower Sand Canyon Trail. When Crow Canyon Archaeological Center archaeologists conducted limited excavations at Castle Rock in 1993 and 1994, they found at least 16 kivas. While most kivas are circular in this area, one was rectangular—a building shape used by modern Hopi people. The village also includes 40 above-ground rooms, nine possible towers and a D-shaped enclosure. For more information on the science at Castle Rock Pueblo go to [http://www.crowcanyon.org/publications/castle\\_rock\\_pueblo.asp](http://www.crowcanyon.org/publications/castle_rock_pueblo.asp)

Located near the south trailhead, Castle Rock Pueblo is built around a sandstone butte. Please respect this ancient village by staying on the trail.

In 1874 western photographer William Henry Jackson described this place as "Fortified Rock on the McElmo." In 1892, it was called "Battle Rock" when the H. Jay Smith Exploring Expedition photographed it. By the turn of the 20th century, the place name changed again and Battle Rock became the common name for the larger promontory to the west. Today, this place is known as Castle Rock.

Courtesy, History Colorado (Jackson Collection, Scan # 10026795)



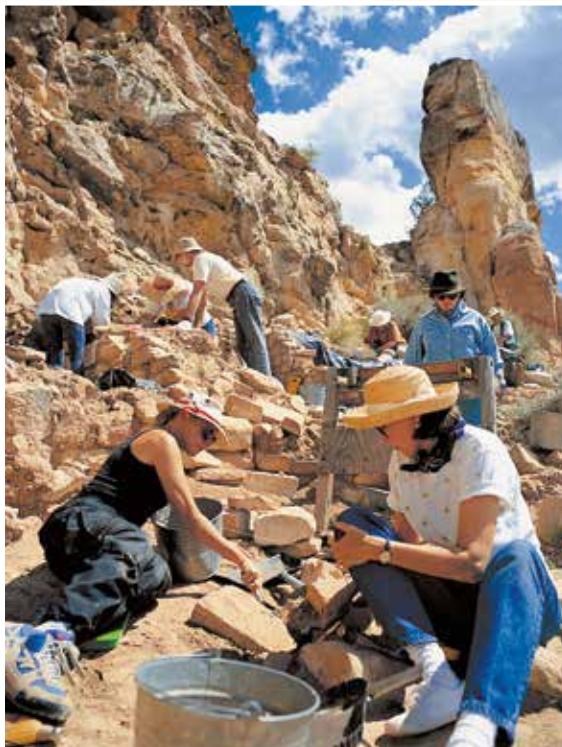
© Jerry Sintz

## Saddlehorn Pueblo

**Saddlehorn Pueblo** is located about a mile from the south trailhead parking lot and is located in a geological feature that looks like a saddle horn. This cliff dwelling has two rooms in the alcove and two structures on a pinnacle approximately 100 feet above the alcove. Please stay on the trail to avoid the collapsed walls and the midden.

Some of the rooms at Saddlehorn may have been used for cooking and sleeping. The rooms on the pinnacle may have been "lookouts" or a place to communicate with neighbors.

A kiva was partially excavated by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center in the late 1980s and then backfilled. It has a main chamber, floor hearth, bench, southern recess, and ventilation system. Few artifacts were found, but the floor was covered with a thick layer of fallen roof material that included large pieces of burned roof beams. Tree ring samples from these beams mostly dated to around AD 1228–1232, with one from the AD 1250s. Pottery studies suggest that Saddlehorn Pueblo was likely lived in from around AD 1250 until about AD 1285. This may mean that most of the roof beams were recycled from an older building in the neighborhood.



© Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

Excavation of Castle Rock Pueblo by Crow Canyon Archaeological Center archaeologists and participants, 1994.

## Donald Dawahongnewa The Hopi Tribe



*We see an abundance of significance in the structures in the canyons to our societies, including kivas. What my grandfather and uncle taught me are the same instructions that the uncles and grandfathers taught in Sand Canyon. The people migrated here in small clans. Many groups passed through this area.*



© Karen R. Adams

This modern wood-fired kiln filled with replica pottery was created to reproduce ancient pottery-making and firing techniques. After the pots were removed, archaeologists learned how to recognize the characteristics of an 800 year old kiln.

## What's Cool?

### Prehistoric Pottery "Industrial Park"...

Especially intriguing is the high concentration of pottery-firing kilns on the mesa top above Sand Canyon. Over 200 kilns were recorded in a 2002 archaeological survey. Until recently, most archaeologists did not recognize the subtle burned soil and rock remnants as an empty kiln. These kilns were tightly clustered, usually within 1,200 feet of at least one other kiln. They are typically located on west-to-north facing slopes and in or along shallow intermittent drainages on rocky slopes. Almost none are in agricultural soils nor are they near home sites. Kiln locations may have been selected for favorable air flow and fire control and because fuelwood was scarce near homes. This also meant that unfired vessels had to be carried some distance from the place of manufacture, i.e. villages, to the kilns where they were fired. Given that each kiln would hold 12 to 30 or more vessels, between 5,400 and 6,600 vessels could have been fired during the Pueblo II and Pueblo III occupation. Overall, this reflects a large investment in labor for kiln construction; for collection of clay and other ceramic manufacturing supplies; for vessel manufacture and transport to the firing areas; and for gathering fuelwood and supplies for the actual firing.



© Jerry Sintz

## Double Cliff House

**Double Cliff House** was built in two ledges of the alcove. Pueblo people must have used a ladder to get to the two upper rooms. There is a window in one of the upper rooms. The stone masonry has been protected by the alcove and is well preserved. The upper ledge is about 40 feet long.

Archaeologists recorded and mapped Double Cliff House in 1965. They found pottery sherds and stone tools that indicated the House was probably used in the thirteenth century, AD 1200s.

## Veronica Cuthair Ute Mountain Ute Tribe



*The Sand Canyon area is known for collecting sumac and narrow leaf yucca for making baskets.*

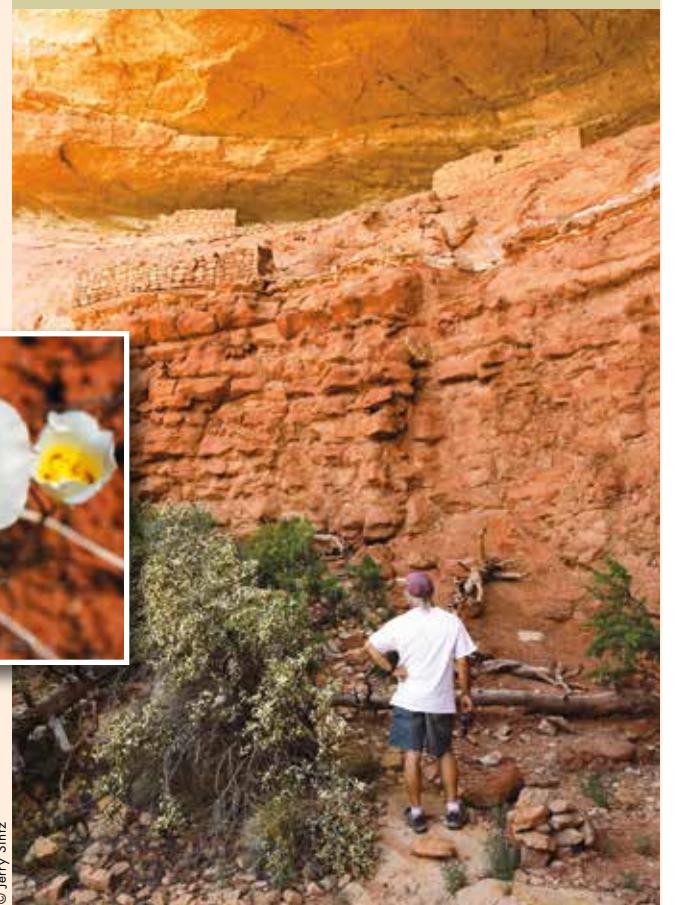
## Corncob House

**The neighbors next door** and to the west at Corncob House only had one alcove in which to build their home. The masonry walls have 3 feet of double-coursed rock in a wide, shallow U-shape with loose sandy trash behind them, as if to create a flat foundation for another structure or a platform. The midden in front of the site is eroded.

Ancient corncobs, two yucca leaf strips tied in knots, and a piece of fiber or loose cordage were found when archaeologists excavated the site in 1965.



Sego Lily



© Jerry Sintz

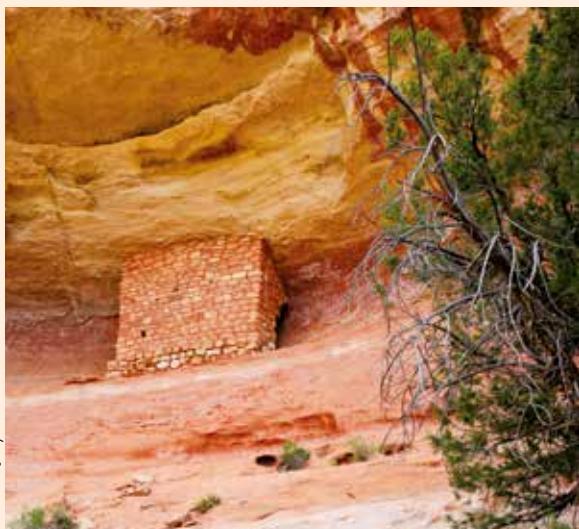
### Sunny Alcove

**Sunny Alcove's architecture** includes eight rooms and a kiva. When archaeologists conducted research at Sunny Alcove in 1965, they found corncobs, 67 pottery sherds, and fragments of manos (grinding stones). Sunny Alcove has remarkably preserved wall niches (little shelves). Once there were wooden latches near the doorway. Notice the square doorways with well-preserved walls.

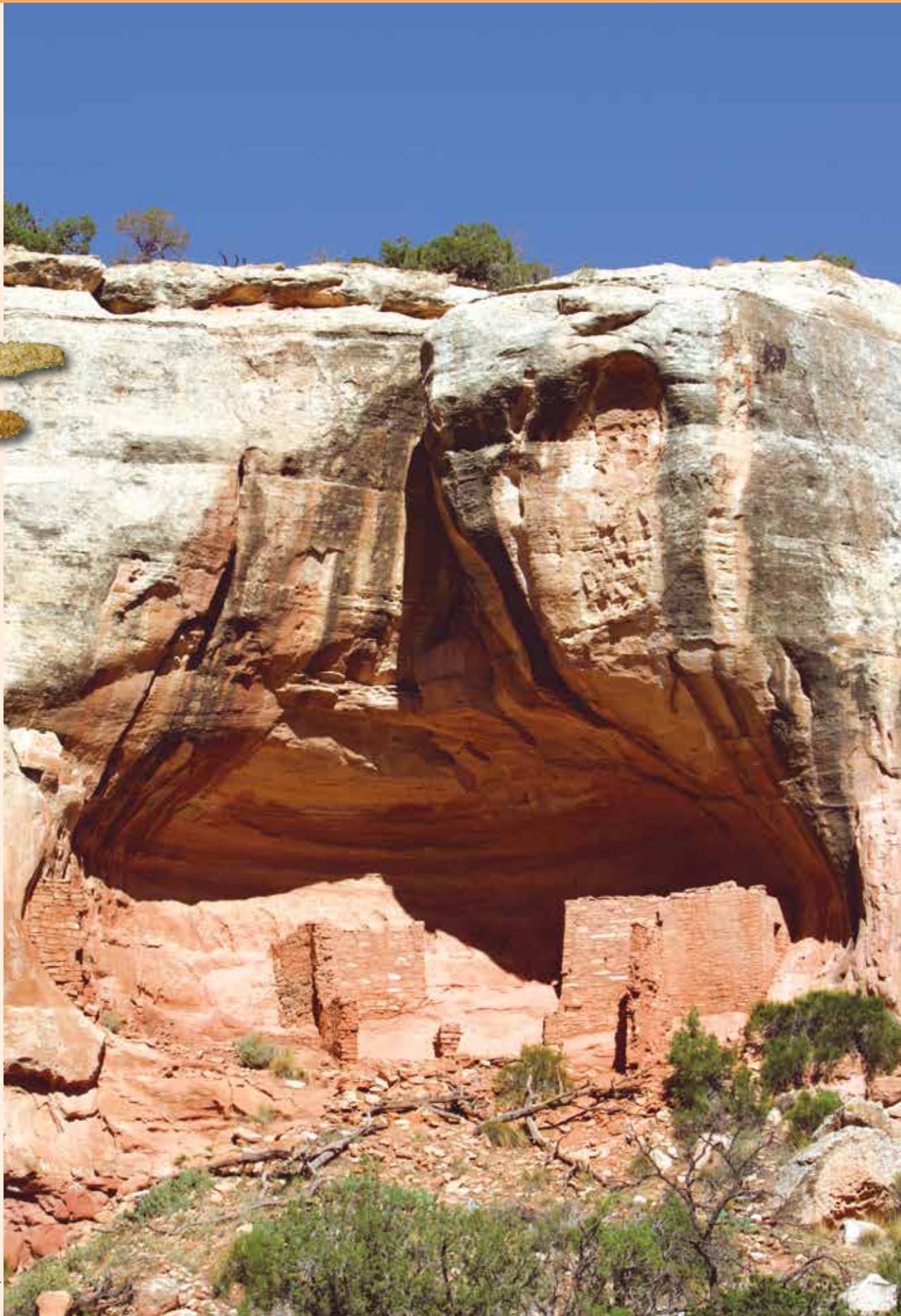


### Tucked Away Two Story House

**The walls of one complete room** are still standing at this site which is about two stories high and has one little window facing south. There is a doorway to the west with toe-holds and a masonry ledge. There were about five rooms based on the outlines in the masonry rubble to the west.



When archaeologists recorded the site in 1965, they found stone flakes and an edge-ground stone scrapper. Pottery sherds identified as Mancos Corrugated, plain gray, white ware and Mancos Black-on-white were also recorded. This type of pottery may indicate that Tucked Away Two Story House was a home in the AD 1100s, but the masonry is more suggestive of the AD 1200s.



### Dawa Taylor, with his son, Christian The Hopi Tribe

*The building is just one part of the site. The midden comes down the slope and may include artifacts like pottery sherds and broken pieces of mano. Even the trees and plants around the site play an important part. These sites have been around for many centuries and a person can damage that century's worth of hard work in just a matter of minutes.*

© Jerry Sintz

© Jerry Sintz

© Chris Simon

# Protect these fragile places: **Please stay out** of ancient architecture 7

## Wall Curves with Bedrock House

**W**all Curves with Bedrock House is a small cliff dwelling with one nearly complete room and some wall remnants. The west portion of the site has a T-shaped doorway and a window facing south in the south wall. There is a second story doorway and two little windows facing south. When archaeologists recorded the site in 1965, pottery sherds were identified as Mancos Corrugated, Plain Gray, Mancos Black-on-white, Plain White, and Mesa Verde Black-on-white. These

types of pottery sherds were made in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, AD 1100–1300. A pendant was also found.



## What's Cool?

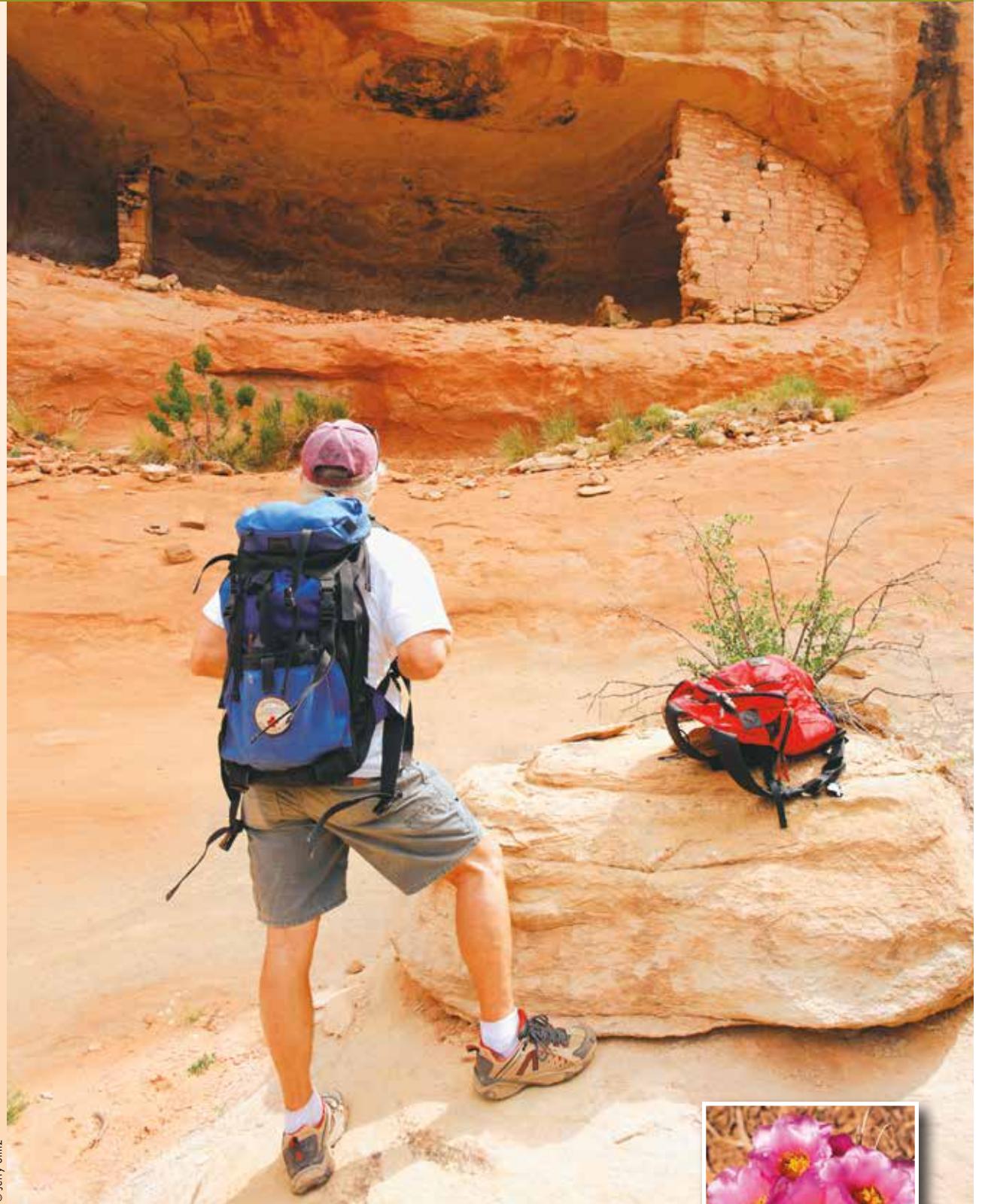
### Cultural Continuity...

Today, many American Indians regard this place as their ancestral homeland. Contrary to the concept of abandonment, all ancestral places are considered a living part of culture. Modern Tribal people maintain close ties to the spirits of ancestors who are buried on this landscape. Sites are visited and blessings made on a regular basis to “keep these places warm.” Centuries-old oral traditions tell stories of migration, feast, famine, conflict and comedy on this landscape...and shrines, traditional plant gathering areas, sacred springs, and ponds of cattails are still regarded with great respect.

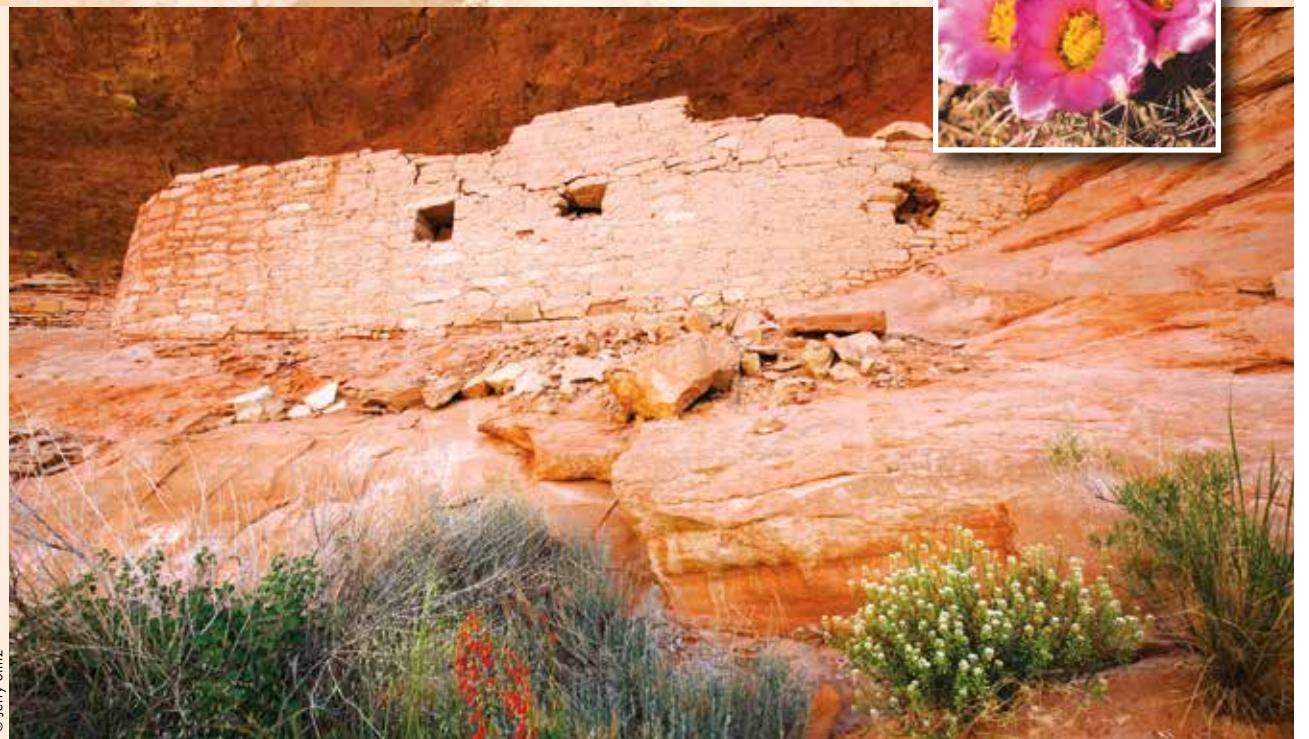


## House with Standing Curved Wall

**T**his site has a 38 foot long curved wall still standing with one well-constructed window. There are remnants of two north-south walls dividing the room. When archaeologists mapped and recorded this site in 1965, only two pottery sherds were found. One was plain white ware and one was from a jar handle. This site is the last and highest of the cliff dwellings on the Sand Canyon Trail.



© Jerry Smitz



© Jerry Smitz



**A**bout AD 1250, families came together around the head of Sand Canyon to build a large and compact village. A thick, one-story-tall, U-shaped wall surrounded hundreds of square rooms, round kivas, and community structures including a plaza, a large D-shaped structure, and a great kiva.

The village seems designed for defense—perhaps due to regional strife over dwindling resources. A spring was at the heart of the village, giving residents exclusive access to their all-important water source. The thick stone outer wall had small, angled peepholes and few doorways. The towers built against the outside face of the wall also provided good lookouts that could only be entered from inside the village.

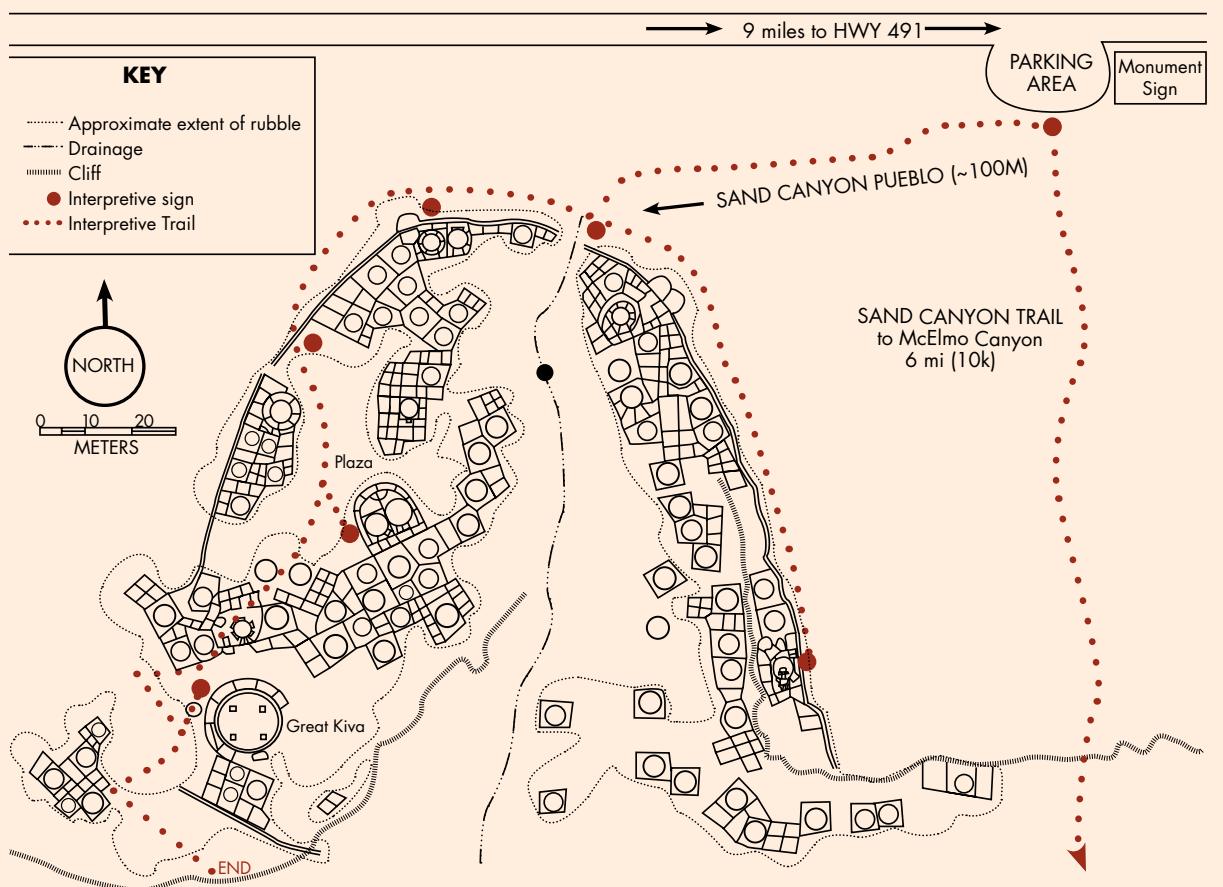
By AD 1275, Sand Canyon Pueblo was about three times the size of Cliff Palace (the largest pueblo in Mesa Verde National Park). Some 600 people—healthy, judged by the standards of their time—had lived for a generation or more within the village. They depended on rain-fed cornfields. The corn fed families and their sizable flocks of turkeys.

AD 1276 saw the onset of a severe, long-term drought. Corn crops were poor or failed completely. Elk and deer were scarce, so they hunted rabbits, rodents, birds, and even carnivores. Some villagers migrated shortly after the drought set in; others stayed, trying to outlast the harsh conditions.

Sometime after AD 1277, Sand Canyon Pueblo suffered a devastating attack, possibly by other Pueblo people competing for the meager resources. Many residents were killed and soon after, the survivors migrated away from the region. The spirits of the ancestors have been the pueblo's only occupants for more than 700 years.



Digital reconstruction of Sand Canyon Pueblo by Dennis R. Holloway



## Tessie Naranjo, Santa Clara Pueblo

*Where did the people go who used to live here? Well, for us Pueblo people we are them. That is as certain as I am sitting here, we are them.*

## Rose B. Simpson, Santa Clara Pueblo

*It's really clear that this place was loved. And that everything was done with really great care. It doesn't matter where you're from, you can still feel that here and the way that everything fits together exactly the way it should. And even as it falls apart, it has a life just as people. It deserves that same love and respect.*

## What's Cool?

### When is a "Kiva" not a Kiva?

Contrary to popular belief, most ancient "kivas" were not exclusively religious structures. Kivas in modern Pueblos are truly sacred spaces and are used mainly for ceremonies. But the round, sunken rooms here (and in many other Ancestral Puebloan archaeological sites)



contain pots, tools, and other common household items—clear signs of daily domestic activity. Nearly every hearth at Sand Canyon Pueblo

was found in a "kiva," not in the rectangular rooms above ground. They were centers for family life, especially



during cold weather.

### The Great Kiva — Hidden in Plain Sight

The Great Kiva, one of the community's largest and most important buildings, was used for ceremonies, gatherings, and feasts. But archaeologists originally failed to notice it, even after several years of work at Sand Canyon Pueblo! Why? Because most great kivas were created by digging down into the soil, and appear today as shallow circular depressions on the surface. This kiva was built of stone, on bedrock, from the ground up, and it was flanked by square rooms on all but its south side. When they collapsed, the room walls seemed to surround a plaza. Eventually, excavations revealed features unique to great kivas—curved walls, a bench, the remains of four pillars, and stone-lined boxes (vaults) on the floor.

The Sand Canyon Pueblo project (left) involved a partnership between the Bureau of Land Management and Crow Canyon Archaeological Center with generous private and public funding. After almost 25 years of planning, excavation, analysis, report writing and curation, Crow Canyon staff created a detailed account of the ancient village and its residents. Their findings shed light on the rapid depopulation of this area around AD 1285.

All artifacts, samples, and records resulting from excavations at Sand Canyon Pueblo are curated at the Visitor Center and Museum in Dolores, Colorado, and are available for study.



Sand Canyon Pueblo was occupied at the same time as Cliff Palace at Mesa Verde National Park. An open site with no protection from the weather, Sand Canyon Pueblo's ancient walls have collapsed.

## What's Cool?

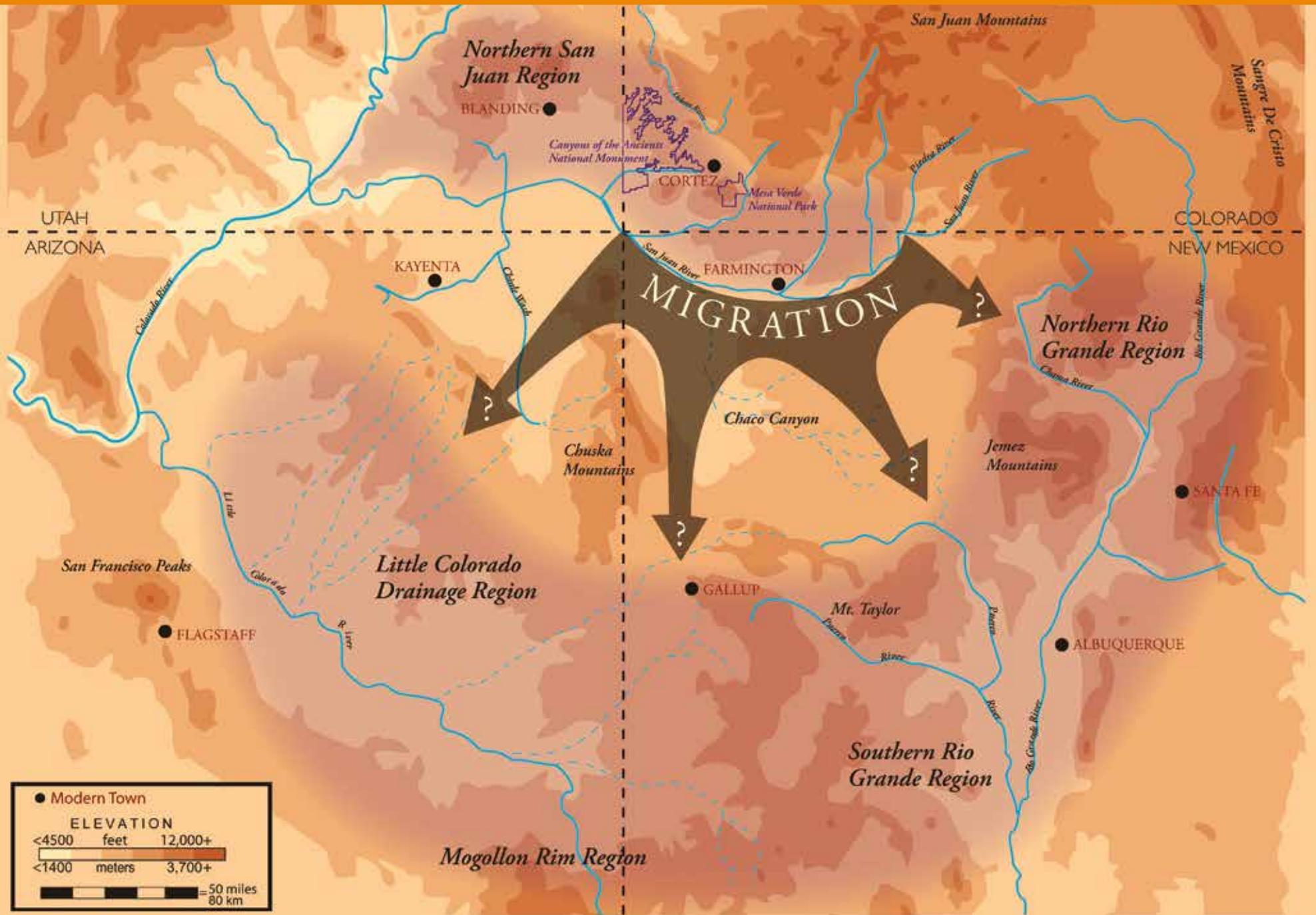
### Large Canyon Rim Village...

The large 13th century village of Sand Canyon Pueblo, containing 420 rooms and 90 kivas, (subterranean rooms used for domestic and religious activities) is known as a canyon-rim community because it is wrapped around the upper edge of a deep canyon and embraced a natural spring. Plazas, great kivas, and D-shaped structures were often incorporated into large sites like Sand Canyon Pueblo and served as places where villagers from the surrounding area could gather for public ceremonies and community activities. Other common elements include north-south orientation, a peripheral enclosing wall, and a bilateral layout with two parts of the site separated by a drainage. Sand Canyon Pueblo clearly demonstrates a change from the building of earlier homes near farmlands to constructing larger, planned village sites around springs. Population during Pueblo III times was probably at its highest from AD 1225–1250, but tree-ring dates indicate that some construction continued into the 1270s. Migration out of the area may have been ongoing for 30 years, but then accelerated, and by AD 1285 the Ancestral Puebloans had moved south into northern New Mexico and Arizona.

© Crow Canyon Archaeological Center



# Prehistoric Migrations



Modern-day Pueblo people still visit southwestern Colorado, including the Sand Canyon area, which continues to hold spiritual meaning for them.



**Pueblo people left** southwestern Colorado in the late 1200s and migrated to new homes in what today are the states of Arizona and New Mexico, as shown on the map above.

In the years following AD 1300, at least two different nomadic groups of hunter-gatherers—the Utes and the Navajos—moved into the region from the west and north.

**Ute communities were well established in western Colorado** when the Spanish first explored the region in the late 1700s. Archaeological evidence indicates that Ute ancestors of the Utes arrived in western Colorado centuries earlier. Both Ute and Hopi oral histories say that Ute and Ancestral Pueblo people lived in the region at the same time.

**Historically, Navajo people were based on the south side of the San Juan River**, and Ute groups on the north side. Scholars debate the exact timing of the Navajo's arrival in the American Southwest, but they were probably in southwestern Colorado at least by the early 1500s, maybe earlier.

## Veronica Cuthair Ute Mountain Ute Tribe



*My father, Ira, was born right here in McElmo Canyon. Prior to the 1960s, many Ute families worked in fields and did farm and ranch work for minimal pay and some food. Some lived in wall tents part of the year. They rarely had vehicles. Mostly they were walking or using horses and wagons or riding horses on the trails coming off of Sleeping Ute Mountain.*

*Sleeping Ute Mountain is sacred. We don't allow anyone up there. It is closed to the public. You are welcome to visit the Ute Tribal Park with a guide.*

**Movement of American settlers** into the Mesa Verde region in the late 1800s brought much conflict for the Utes who already occupied and used the land. Multiple skirmishes resulted in casualties on both sides. Such conflicts led to treaties that reduced Ute territories and created reservations—often far away from original tribal homelands.

Under the Homestead Act of 1862, a citizen 21 years old or head of a household could claim up to 160 acres of public land. Homesteading farmers in this area, like the Ancestral Puebloans, depended entirely on rain and snowfall to grow their crops. The land was cleared by hand and a garden area was established to feed the family and livestock. Trips to town were rare and required days of planning and travel.

## Rebecca Hammond Ute Mountain Ute Tribe



*Sand Canyon is more than just a trail to me. It's the way you appreciate it. It's a great place where people have traveled for thousands of years.*

## What's Cool?

### What New Yorkers were reading in 1874...

What archaeological site on the Sand Canyon Trail is one of very few prehistoric sites about which an oral history/legend was published over 125 years ago? Castle Rock Pueblo. Go to: [http://www.crowcanyon.org/ResearchReports/CastleRock/Text/crpw\\_oralhistory.asp](http://www.crowcanyon.org/ResearchReports/CastleRock/Text/crpw_oralhistory.asp) for a full transcript of Ernest Ingersoll's story in the New York Tribune from Nov. 3, 1874.

## The North Trailhead & Goodman Point

The area is named after Henry Goodman, foreman for the Lacey-Coleman Cattle Company which brought the first cows to the area. Most homesteaders arrived at Goodman Point between 1911 and 1925. By 1920, Goodman Point boasted 160 settlers. Remnants of this early community are its cemetery and nearby one-room schoolhouse (both on private property). Many descendants of the original homesteaders still live and farm on Goodman Point's rich wind-blown soil.

## The South Trailhead & McElmo Canyon

Most likely named after Thomas McElmel, a companion of Captain John Moss and other 1870s miners in the area, the land in and around McElmo Canyon was used as open range for several large cattle companies by the late 1880s. The warmer climate, longer growing season, and more readily available water resources were excellent for fruit orchards. Evidence of the homesteading days in McElmo Canyon is still visible in beautiful old stone homes, family farms, ranches, and especially the Battle Rock School, in operation since 1915.

Today traditional agriculture continues with alfalfa fields and orchards found next to vineyards and wineries. Many of the historic stone houses are now prized and restored homes.



The Jasper Hall family is credited with starting and planting many fruit varieties that won prizes like this medal from the St. Louis International Exposition in 1904.

## Charlie Stiles Historic resident of McElmo Canyon

*In the winter when the old route froze, you could hear those wagon wheels popping a long ways off. Traders from Blanding, Mexican Hat, Monticello and Bluff would come up the McElmo in the wintertime because the roads were too muddy. Our place had water and always had a lot of corn and hay to sell.*



## Dorothy & Jimmy Porter Multi-generation McElmo farming family

*It's the best place to live. We love it down here.*

## Kristie Carriker Canyon Trails Ranch



*You have to be a hiker, mountain biker, or horse rider to see the archaeological sites in this area. You can't just park and walk anywhere. Respect private land and don't trespass.*



This young family of homesteaders appears to be camped in an orchard with the family car safely protected under a tarp.



Courtesy of Carol Stanley Newby

Mrs. Audra Stanley—a well-respected Goodman Point matriarch, enjoys a moment to read. Women would have worked long days in the summer to grow and preserve food.

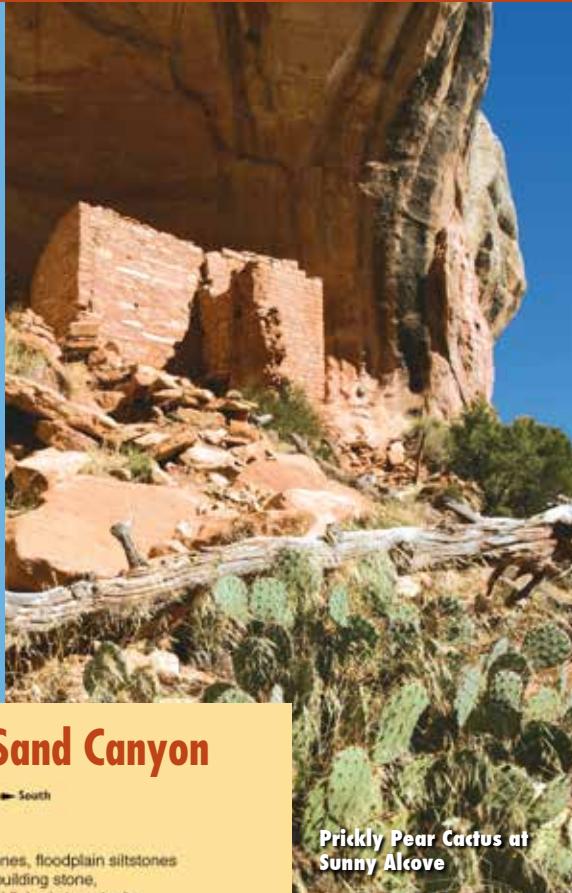


Students from the one-room Goodman Point School pose on the front steps with a favorite dog. The school is now privately owned.



Red Tail Hawk

**The Sand Canyon Trail** south trailhead parking area starts on the Navajo Sandstone Formation slickrock and overlooks the McElmo Canyon floodplain.



Prickly Pear Cactus at Sunny Alcove



Barrel Cactus Blossoms



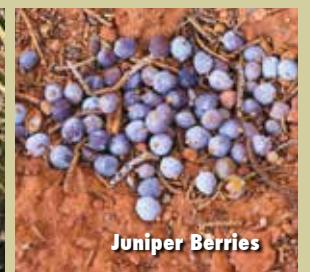
Mormon Tea & Sage



Lupine

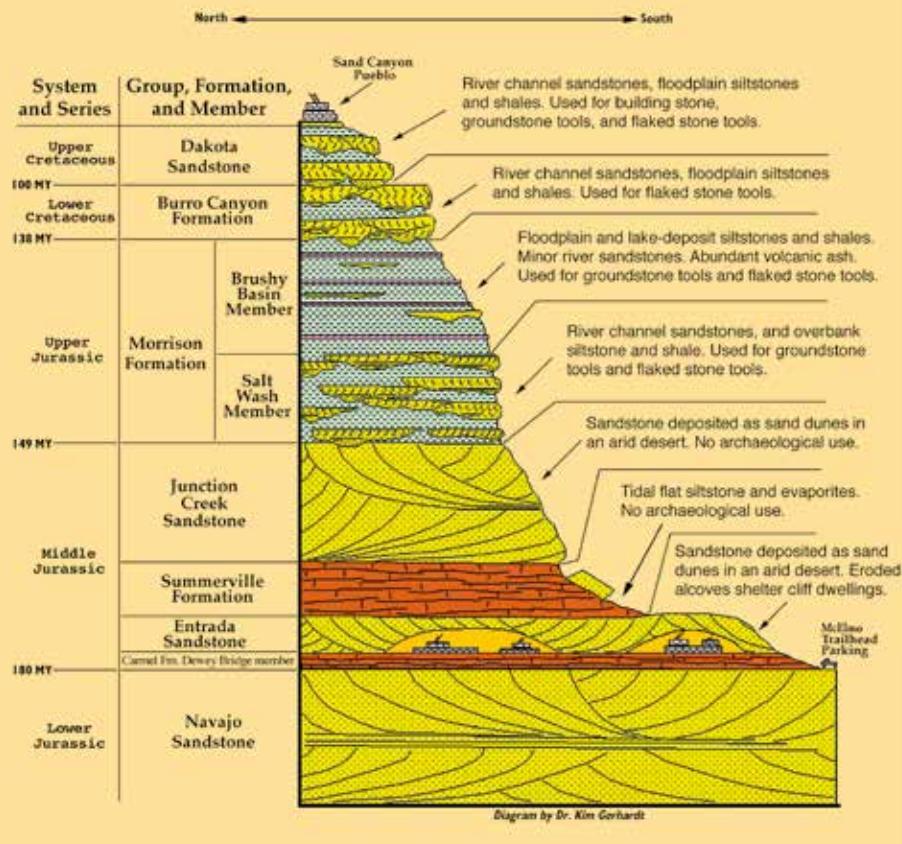


Yucca



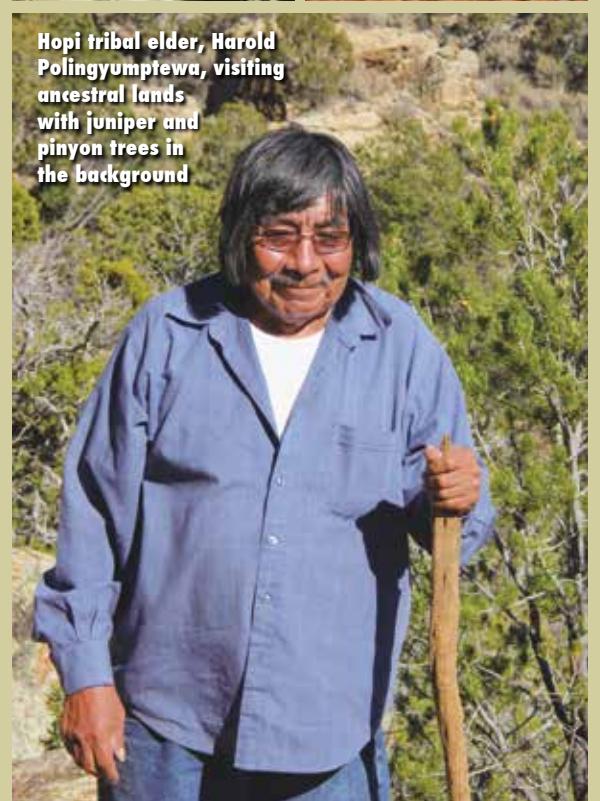
Juniper Berries

## Geologic Formations Exposed in Sand Canyon



## Ecological Tips from ecologist Leslie Stewart:

- **Be light. Be careful.** It's not like a city park where you can just unload the dogs and have at it.
- **Those black soils...** They are a whole living community with dozens of species of lichens, blue-green algae, and mosses. They hold the whole place together. Once they are eroded, you start losing the soils.



Hopi tribal elder, Harold Polingyumptewa, visiting ancestral lands with juniper and pinyon trees in the background

## Don't Bust the Crust...

Biological soil crusts keep the landscape healthy but are easily destroyed.

Watch out, the dirt is alive!



Artwork courtesy of the USGS, US Geological Survey, Department of the Interior

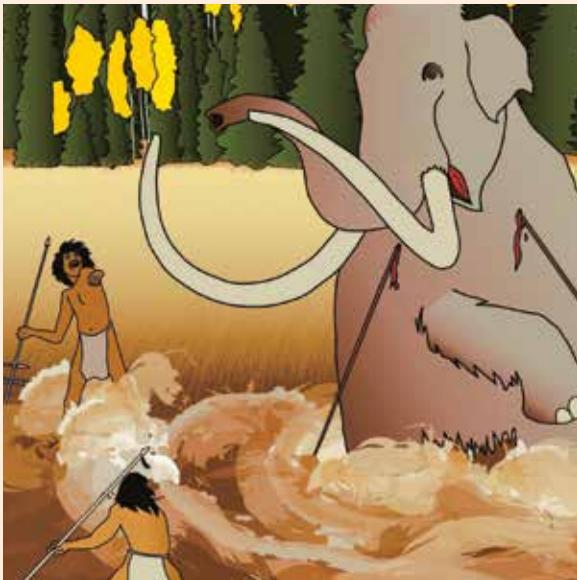
- **The crust communities are very fragile.** You make one or two passes and it will be decades before it can repair itself.
- **I like to visit Sand Canyon in the spring or late summer** when you get the monsoon rains. Most people like the showy flowers—like blooming cactus or yucca. I really like the grasses—some of the tiniest ones grow in little islands of soil in the slickrock.
- **I've heard crust researchers say that the oldest and most highly developed crust communities have a whole topography to them.** The older they get the higher the peaks and crannies. The older ones have more lichens associated with them. The younger ones are mostly blue-green algae.

Chainpod, at right, is a member of the Pea family and can be quite plentiful after a good snow year or a wet fall.



Chainpod

## Paleoindian

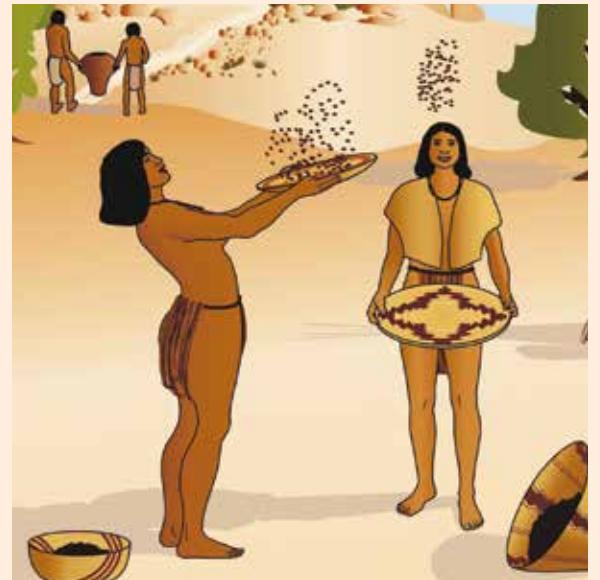


Original artwork by Theresa Breznau, Living Earth Studios

## Archaic



## Basketmaker II



## Ancient People in Sand Canyon and Rock Creek

**P**eople lived on this landscape beginning as early as the late Pleistocene era (or Ice Age) — about 10,000 years ago. Small bands of **Paleoindians** hunted large game (like mammoths and camels) and gathered wild plant foods in a cool, moist environment.

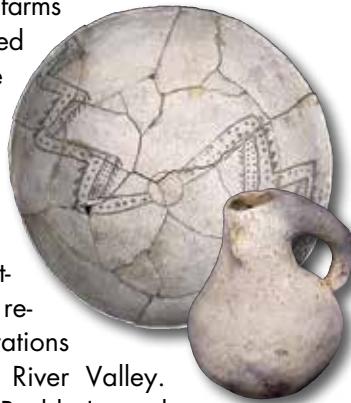


Gradually, over several millennia, the climate warmed and became dryer. During the **Archaic** period (beginning about 7,500 years ago), increasing numbers of hunters and gatherers roamed the landscape, expanding their diet with a wider variety of plants and animals fostered by the warmer climate.

Agriculture, introduced from the south about 4,000 years ago, marked the beginnings of Pueblo culture in the Four Corners area. **Basketmaker II** people began supplementing their diet by growing corn and squash. People began to live a more settled lifestyle and by about 2,500 years ago they became dependent on corn for the majority of their daily calories.

Later **Basketmaker III** people added beans, an important protein, to their crops, began making pottery, and hunted with the bow-and-arrow. Clusters of small family farms formed the first settled communities across the landscape.

About 1,300 years ago, warmer, drier weather during the **Pueblo I** period prompted many families to relocate to higher elevations such as the Dolores River Valley.



Although Pueblo I people built many villages, no large ones were in the area of Sand Canyon. At the end of this period, a severe drought drove many people from the region.

Farmers resettled the Sand Canyon area during the more favorable climate of the **Pueblo II** period beginning about 1,100 years ago.

### What's Cool?

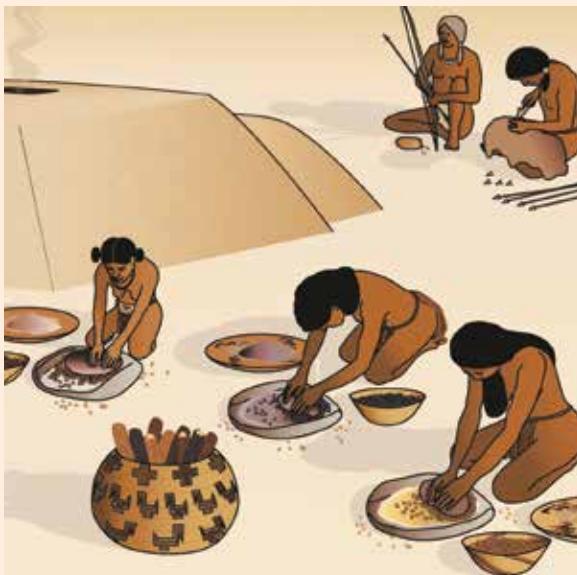
#### Site Density Analysis...

Within Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, the Sand Canyon Archaeological District has an abundance of sites representative of the mid- to late-Ancestral Puebloan occupation in the Pueblo II and Pueblo III time periods (AD 900–1300). Almost 1,400 sites are recorded in this 14,500-acre area. Most sites are small rubble mounds or limited activity areas; small cliff dwellings are in natural shelters and have standing masonry walls. Only the sites on the main Sand Canyon Trail are open to the public.

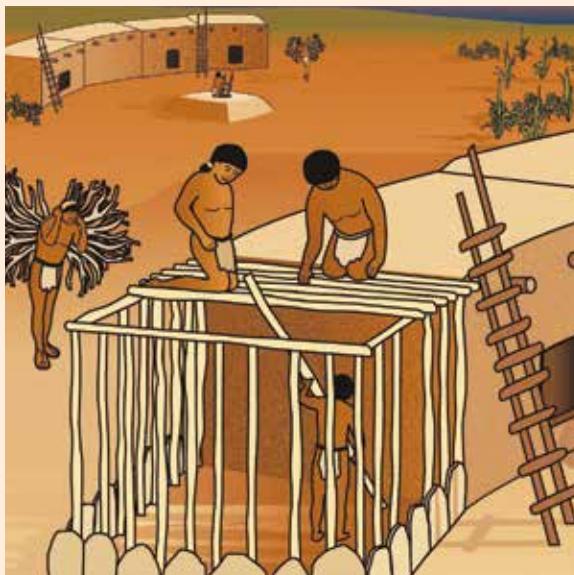
Communities dotted the landscape in greater numbers than ever before. However, severe drought set in at the end of this period.

About 850 years ago population skyrocketed during the early Pueblo III period. The number of people living in the area probably exceeded today's population. Wild game became depleted, families depended on their crops, and around 1100 AD domesticated turkeys became an important food source.

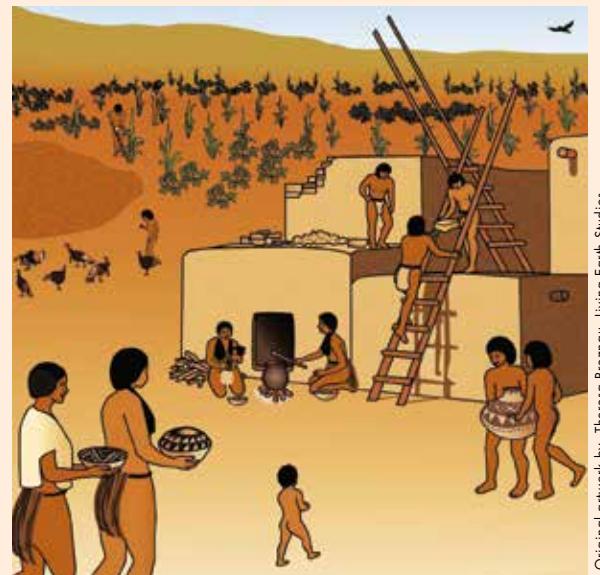
## Basketmaker III



## Pueblo I



## Pueblo II & III



Original artwork by Theresa Breznau, Living Earth Studios

# Imagine that you are an Ancestral Pueblo kid ...going to visit a friend in another village

The Sand Canyon area contains hundreds of ancient homes. More than 700 years ago, Pueblo families lived in these places.

## Unscramble

the letters above the pictures to answer the questions.

1. What would you carry your water in?
2. What would you carry your items in?
3. Who would you tell before you leave to visit a friend in another village?
4. What type of gift would you bring?
5. How would you carry your baby brother or sister?
6. Why would you hike with another person?
7. What game might you play along the way?
8. What type of house might your friend live in?
9. What small animal might you see?
10. What large animal might you see?
11. What would you enjoy looking at along the way?

(Answer key at far right)



© Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

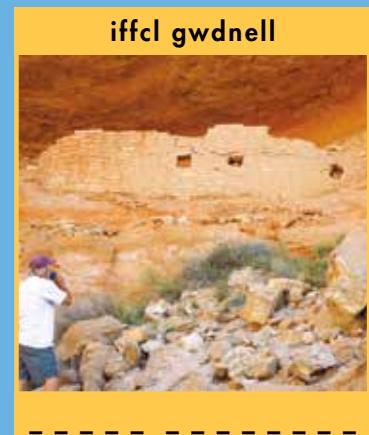
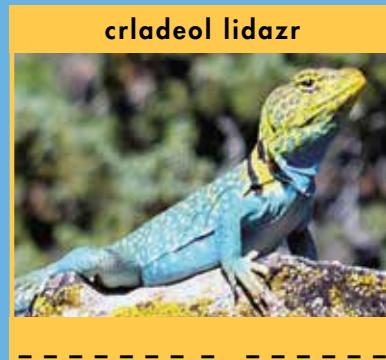
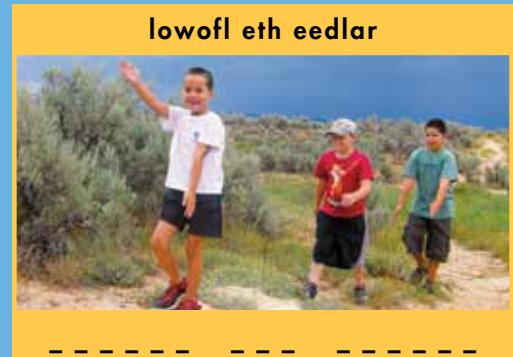
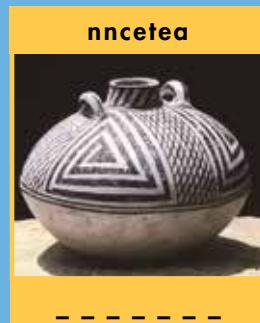
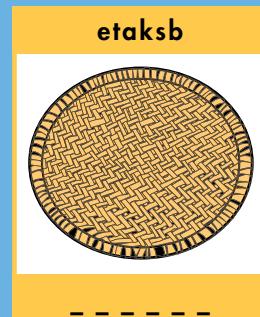
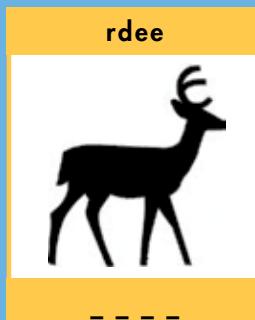
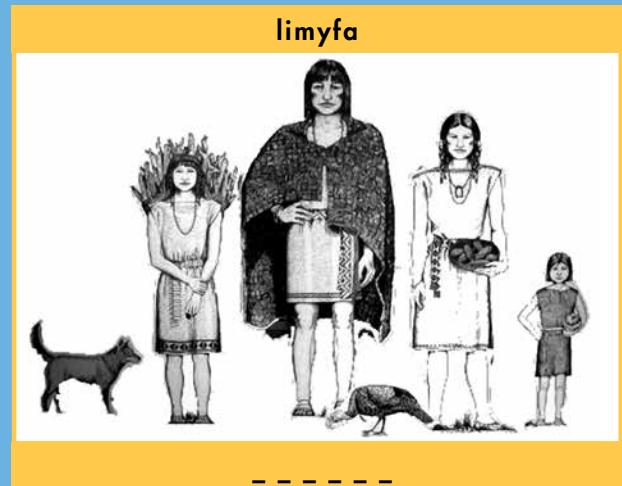


Image: BigStockPhoto.com © Dennis Donohue



ANSWER KEY: 1. Canteen 2. Basket 3. Family 4. Food 5. Cradleboard 6. Mountain lion 7. Follow the leader 8. Cliff dwelling 9. Collared lizard 10. Deer 11. Rocks



## What is the terrain like and how long is the trail?

Trails are rugged and unpaved with large areas of exposed rock. The southern trailhead leads to several loop trail options in Sand Canyon, Rock Creek, and East Rock Creek (see map page 2). Distance from top to bottom is about 6 miles and includes a steep elevation change of 700 feet involving 30 switchbacks.

## Can I take my dog?

Yes. Dogs need to be controlled preferably with a leash. Anticipate small children, other dogs, horses, mountain bikes, cactus and even venomous snakes. Please Leave No Trace—keep your dogs out of archaeological sites and springs and bring a plastic bag to scoop the poop. Remember to bring enough water for your dog.

## Can I ride a mountain bike or a horse on the trails?

Yes. See the trail map on page 2. Remember that bikes yield to horses and pedestrians. Horse trailer parking is VERY limited. Do not park on private property.

## Can I explore off-trail in the Sand Canyon/Rock Creek area?

No. Archaeological sites and biological soil crusts are extremely fragile. Please stay on designated routes and respect closed areas. Motorized travel is prohibited.

## Why are some trails marked with spur signs and other paths are not?

Spur signs indicate designated access to places of interest, such as a cliff dwelling or a unique view which is off the main trail. Other paths were created by disrespectful users and should not be followed.

## How far is it to archaeological sites? What will I see?

To see archaeological sites, you must first walk, bike, or ride a horse. There are nine sites along the main Sand Canyon trail that are open to the public and accessible via the main trail or marked spur trails. Located near the north trailhead is a large rubble mound site known as Sand Canyon Pueblo. Other archaeological sites are closed to the public due to their fragile conditions and increasing visitor damage. The closest cliff dwelling is one mile uphill from the south trailhead.

## What should I do if I find an artifact?

Enjoy the ancient human connection, but leave artifacts in place for the next person. Collecting artifacts and disturbing an archaeological site is illegal.

## What if I witness vandalism, digging or artifact collecting?

Please report any vandalism or damage to the historic or archaeological sites to the Tres Rios Field Office and Canyons of the Ancients Law Enforcement Tip Line: 833-660-5771 (toll free), TRFOtpline@blm.gov, or call the Montezuma County Sheriff at 970-565-8441.

## Do I need a permit?

If you are part of a group greater than 15 persons or a commercial group of any size, you need to contact Monument headquarters for a permit at 970-882-5600 prior to using the area.

## Can I camp at the Sand Canyon and Rock Creek areas?

No. Overnight camping is not allowed due to heavy visitation and fragile resources. Please call the Visitor Center & Museum at 970-882-5600 for camping options.

## What kinds of animals will I see?

Deer, coyotes, fox, badgers, skunk, rabbits, rodents, snakes, lizards, and sometimes elk, mountain lions, marmots, and bears are known in the area. A bird list is available from the Visitor Center & Museum.

## Who Takes Care of This Place? YOU DO!

All persons visiting public land can help by parking responsibly, staying on the trail, and practicing Leave No Trace principles. Many people who love Sand Canyon/Rock Creek also volunteer in site steward and trail information specialist programs. For more information, please contact Amala Posey-Monk, volunteer coordinator, at 970-882-5621



Conor Russell and his grandfather Dale Davidson are volunteer Site Stewards. They regularly check on their adopted sites and immediately report any changes.



Volunteer Trail Information Specialist Tom Getts often hikes the Sand Canyon and Rock Creek Trails and answers visitor questions.

 HISTORY Colorado  
STATE HISTORICAL FUND

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**Photography:** Bureau of Land Management personnel and other images are credited where indicated

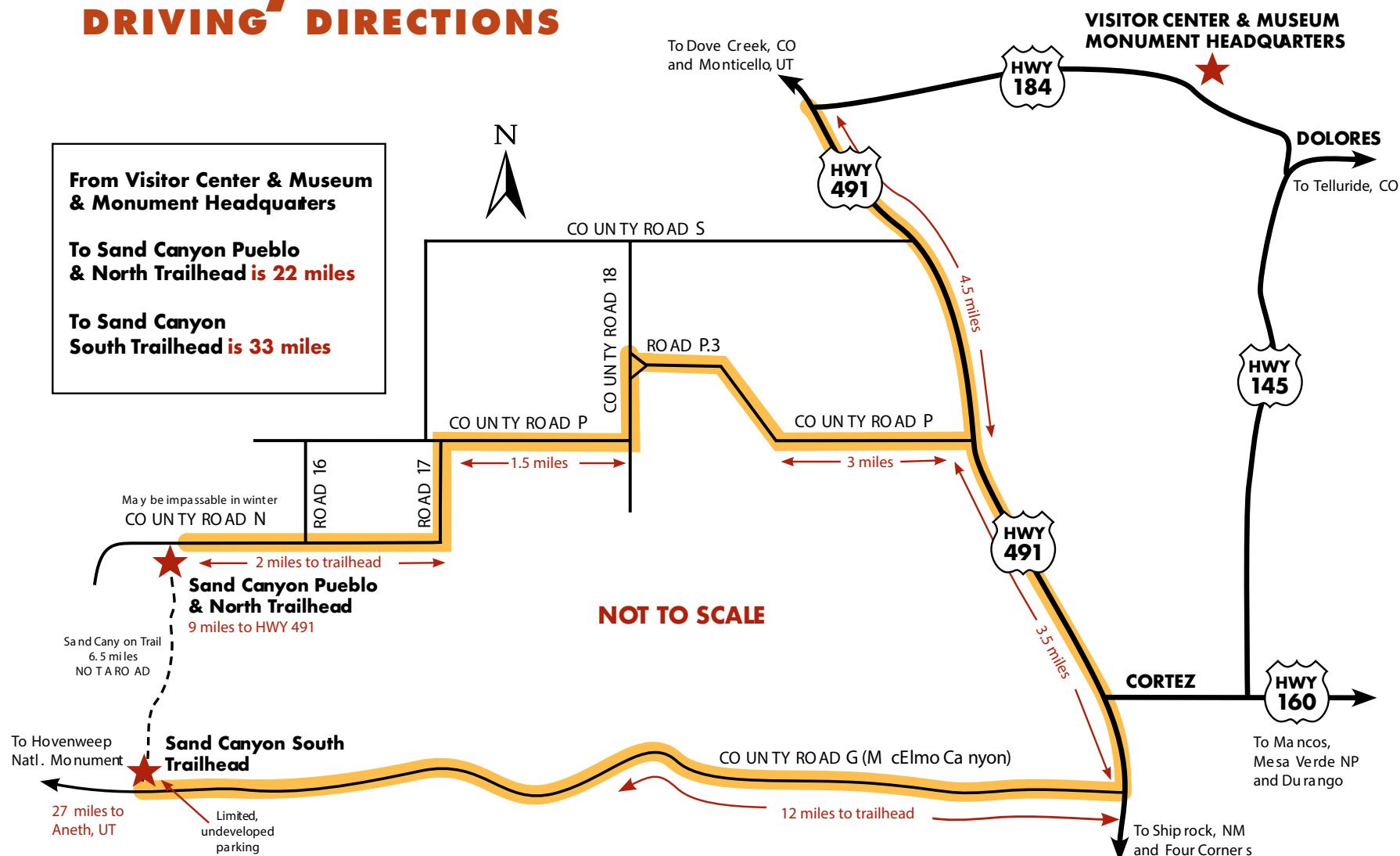
**Design:** Nancy Leach, Graphic Interpretations



CROW CANYON  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTER

# Sand Canyon & Rock Creek Trails

## DRIVING DIRECTIONS



### Plan a safe trip:

- **THERE ARE NO RESTROOMS.**
- Pack it in; pack it out.
- Expect limited or no cell phone reception.
- Tell someone your plans and expected route.
- Don't park on the road or on private property.
- **Allow ½ hour driving time to either trailhead from Cortez or the Visitor Center & Museum.**
- **STAY ON THE TRAIL. Off trail use in Sand Canyon is prohibited.**
- Although archaeological sites look inviting, stay out. Routes are designated and areas are closed to protect these fragile places.

### Take:

- At least 1 gallon of water per day per person! The Monument is very dry and often very hot. There is **NO WATER** at the trailheads or trails.
- Sunscreen, insect repellent, a hat, long pants, sturdy footwear, and good socks.
- Food and a first aid kit.
- A good map.

### Want a short walk (1 mile)?

- Visit Sand Canyon Pueblo at the North Trailhead.
- Walk to the trail marker and back at the South Trailhead.

### Want a horse or bike trail?

- Horseback riders may ride trails as shown on the trail map on page 2.
- Bikers may ride trails as shown on the trail map on page 2.

### Want an indoor option or a paved trail with universal accessibility?

- Visit the Visitor Center & Museum to see artifacts excavated from Sand Canyon Pueblo.
- Take the paved trail at the Visitor Center & Museum to Escalante Pueblo for spectacular hilltop views of the surrounding mountains (1 mile round-trip).

### Have a few hours?

- Hike Sand Canyon Trail at the South Trailhead to Saddlehorn Pueblo (2 miles round-trip).
- Visit the Visitor Center & Museum to see artifacts excavated from Sand Canyon. Visit Sand Canyon Pueblo at the North Trailhead (1 mile round-trip hike).
- Hike the North Trailhead to the switchback overlook (4 miles round-trip).

### Have a full day?

- Hike the Rock Creek, East Rock or Sand Canyon loops from the South Trailhead.
- Leave a car at the South Trailhead and take a second car to the North Trailhead. Hike the main Sand Canyon trail one way downhill (6 miles).
- Drive to the South trailhead. Hike to the switchbacks and return. (8 miles total).

