



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

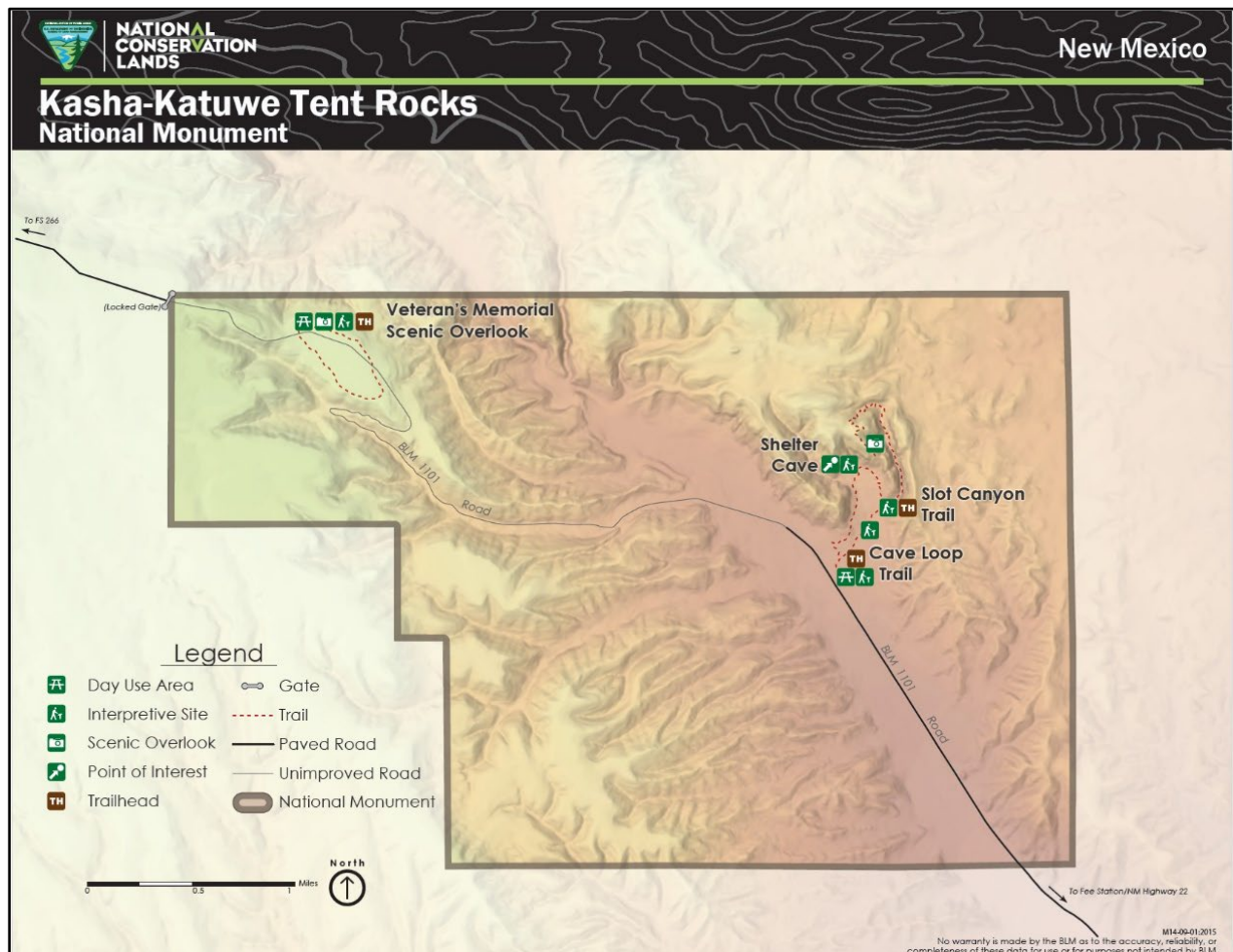
New Mexico
2024: Annual Manager's Report

Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks

National Monument



Map



Accomplishments

Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument (Monument) remained closed in Fiscal Year 2024, making 4 years since its closure in 2020. Prior to COVID, the Monument provided a diverse outdoor recreation experience for upwards of 100,000 visitors a year. Beginning in November of 2022, the Rio Puerco Field Office (RPFO), Albuquerque District Office (ADO), and the New Mexico State Office (NMSO) began a year-long coordinated effort to create a Title IV, Section 638 multi-year funding agreement with Pueblo de Cochiti (Pueblo) under the Indian Self Determination and Education Enhancement Act. In November of 2023, the BLM State Director for New Mexico and the Governor of Pueblo de Cochiti signed the multi-year funding agreement.

The Pueblo de Cochiti officially signed the multi-year funding agreement on March 25, 2024, which initiated the transfer of funds from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the Pueblo. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2025, the Pueblo will help the agency provide day-to-day operations for visitor services at the Monument throughout the entire year. Under the agreement, the BLM provides the Pueblo with funding to support the programs, functions, services, and activities in the Monument.

This unique agreement allows the agency to honor our commitment in providing quality recreation and visitor services for individuals, groups, educational institutions, and permittees visiting the Monument.

Challenges

Throughout Fiscal Year 2024, RPFO received frequent inquiries from the public regarding the Monument's reopening status. The RPFO's website for the Monument consistently ranked as the most visited website for BLM New Mexico. One of the primary concerns being public access to the Monument.

RPFO initially closed the Monument to reduce COVID-19 exposure to the gateway community of Pueblo de Cochiti and remained closed throughout Fiscal Year 2024. However, during Fiscal Year 2024, RPFO continued to work closely with the Pueblo government to develop a reopening plan. Both the Pueblo and the RPFO looked at long-standing issues including over-visitation, long wait times, staffing needs, and the ability to provide resource protection. In March of 2024, the Pueblo formally signed the multi-year Section 638 funding agreement, and the BLM and the Pueblo began moving forward toward reopening the Monument. The BLM and the Pueblo reopened the Monument shortly after the close of Fiscal Year 2024, in November of 2024.



Hikers enjoying the Monument.

Visitors

Over the years, the Monument has been a popular site to visit, attracting visitors beyond the local community. The Monument welcomed visitors from across the nation and around the world. Prior to the current closure, average annual use grew exponentially from 2015 to 2019, during which the Monument saw an annual visitation of over 110,000 visitors. This increase in visitation led to noticeable resource degradation, unsafe conditions and a diminished quality of the visitor experience. The Pueblo also voiced concerns about their privacy due to the large number of visitors passing through their community enroute to the Monument.

Due to the ongoing closure since 2020, the Monument saw no visitation in Fiscal Year 2024. Upon reopening, the RPFO and the Pueblo agreed to limit visitation to no more than 50,000 visitors per year, aligning with the recommendations of the Monument RMP. To achieve this goal, the RPFO collaborated with Recreation.gov to implement a reservation system to manage visitor entries into the Monument. Limiting annual visitation to 50,000 will help preserve natural and cultural resources while ensuring a safer, more enjoyable experience for all visitors.



Young children taking in the KKTR landscape.

Partnerships

The BLM recognizes the need for collaborative relationships with community service partners in recreation. These networks include locally based government agencies at all levels, including city, county, tribal, state, and federal. Private sector industries and businesses are also key service providers, including educational institutes, commercial tour providers, retail businesses, and other nongovernmental organizations. The BLM intends to increase and improve collaboration with community service providers by fostering current partnerships and identifying and developing new ones. Partnership in community networks will enable the BLM to manage recreation resources on public lands to deliver social, economic, and environmental goals.

Pueblo de Cochiti

One of the most unique partnerships in BLM is with Pueblo de Cochiti. This long-standing relationship ensures collaboration between RPFO and the Pueblo, not only for tribal consultation, but also with incorporating Pueblo input into management practices and projects at the Monument.

An important aspect of Presidential Proclamation 7394 is the recognition of the human settlement that is “believed to have begun in the monument as a series of campsites during the Archaic period, from approximately 5500 B.C. During the fifteenth century, several large ancestral pueblos were established in the area. Their descendants, the Pueblo de Cochiti, still inhabit the surrounding area. Remnants of human history are scattered throughout the Monument.”

The Proclamation also directs the BLM, pursuant to applicable legal authorities and in close cooperation with the Pueblo de Cochiti, to implement the purposes of the proclamation. The RMP includes additional objectives between the BLM and the Pueblo, including:

- Enhance the manageability of the Monument [RU-2a].
- Provide for resource protection, and visitor health and safety [RU-2b].
- Provide outstanding customer service for visitors while controlling visitor use [RU-2c].
- Provide for economic opportunity through employment and services [RU-2d].
- Ensure continuity of traditional tribal practices [RU-2e].
- Maintain tranquility for the Pueblo de Cochiti [RU-2f]

This collaboration ensures that the BLM meets the objectives outlined in the RMP while actively seeking out, recognizing, and addressing the Pueblo’s concerns. Throughout Fiscal Year 2024, the RPFO continued regular tribal consultation with the Pueblo to address long standing issues such as supplemental rules, agreements, and access.



Tent Rocks Landscape.

Science

The BLM completed the Monument Science Plan in August 2020. The BLM has not completed any further action on science related projects as of the close of Fiscal Year 2024. RPFO staff and Cochiti Pueblo continue to monitor resources within the Monument throughout the closure.



Cholla Cactus.

Outreach and Special Events

In Fiscal Year 2024, the RPFO collaborated with the Pueblo de Cochiti to reopen the Monument in early Fiscal Year 2025. This will enable the resumption of outreach efforts and special events at the Monument. RPFO looks forward to detailing the outcomes of these efforts in the Fiscal Year 2025 Monument Manager's Report for Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument.



Park ranger with a young visitor.

Beginning of a New Era

The reopening of the Monument, in conjunction with the execution of the Section 638 agreement, represents a new chapter in natural resources management. RPFO takes pride in collaborating with the people of the Pueblo de Cochiti to start this new era together. As the Monument reopens in the Fiscal Year 2025, there may be unforeseen challenges and setbacks. However, the RPFO remains committed to overcoming any obstacles to ensure this vibrant part of New Mexico's cultural heritage remains open and accessible for all to enjoy.



Tent Rock Formations.



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Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument

National Monument

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