



Prehistoric Trackways National Monument
Bureau of Land Management
FY 2009 Manager's Report

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION SYSTEM

**Prehistoric Trackways National Monument
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- Unit: Prehistoric Trackways National Monument
Las Cruces District Office
BLM New Mexico State Office

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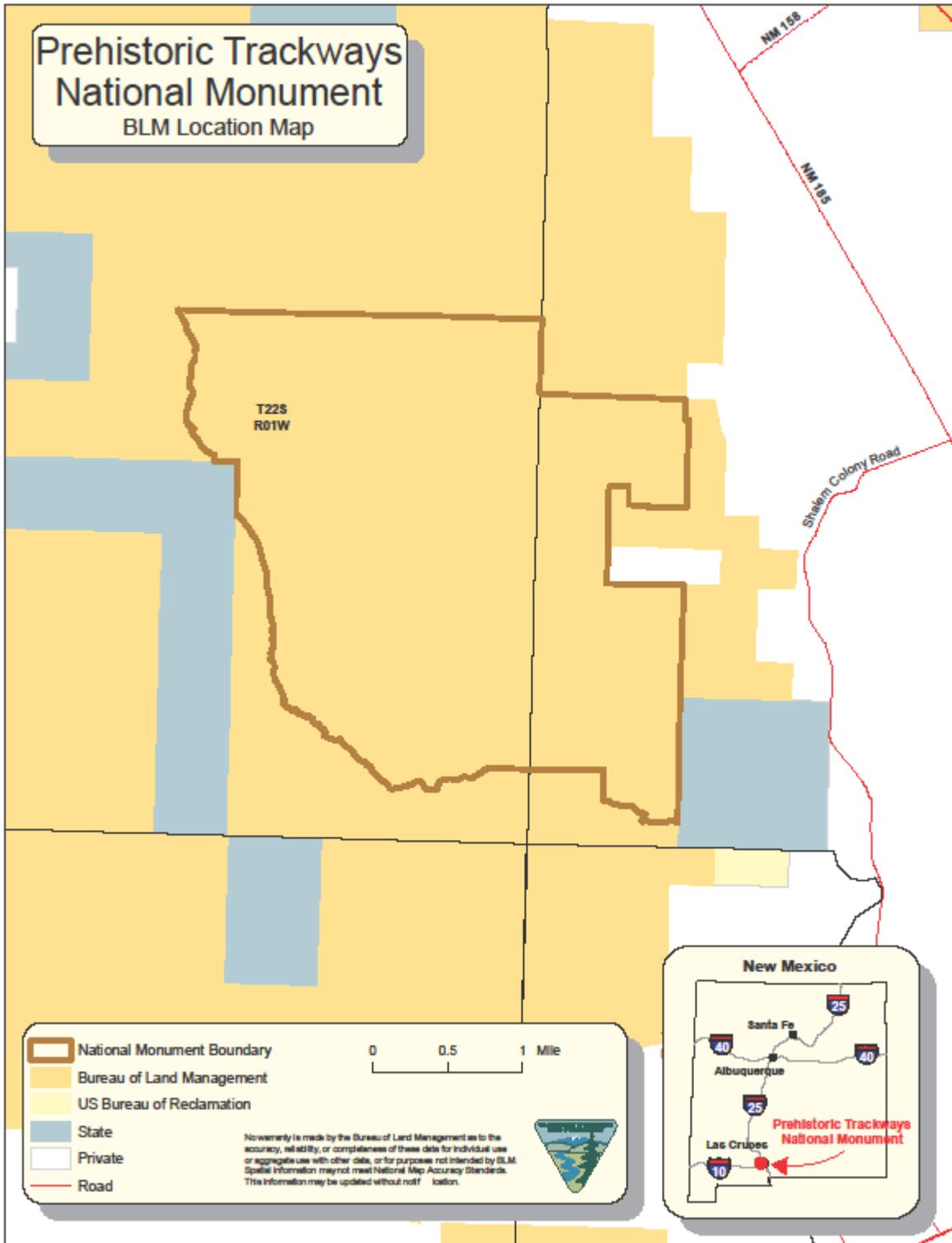
- Established: Public Law 111-11 (Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009), March 30, 2009

- Acreage: 5,280 BLM acres

- Annual visitation: 2,600

Prehistoric Trackways National Monument

BLM Location Map



SECTION I - NATURAL AND HERITAGE RESOURCES CONDITIONS

Natural Resources Trends:

- There are two grazing allotments within the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument [PTNM]. Both allotments are in early seral condition class. Monitoring studies were completed between 1982 and 1995; the studies indicated that both allotments are in fair to good condition.
- Tamarisk is known to occur in Apache Canyon and other smaller drainages within the monument boundaries in small and isolated patches within a few of the arroyos. Trend for this species had not been assessed, but will be actively monitored as a part of increased management commensurate with the recent establishment of the monument.
- The PTNM is a Chihuahuan desert and scrub habitat consisting of mixed shrub mountain, grass mountain and creosote breaks. Species status and occurrence has not been determined; however, a number of Special Status Species are likely to occur in PTNM. During development of the Resource Management Plan [RMP] for the monument, consultation will occur with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will further identify and describe Special Status Species, establish baseline data, management needs, and potential impacts from RMP decision alternatives.

Heritage Resources Trends

- The cultural and paleontological resources on-site within the PTNM are generally in stable condition, and are being monitored by staff and volunteers. Any damage to surface paleontological resources reported has been primarily due to natural events (rainfall runoff). Through the RMP BLM will be evaluating appropriate measures to provide for site stabilization. Prior to designation of the monument, paleontological specimens were collected, removed and stored in a designated repository under permit. BLM monitors these collections and all are in stable condition. The majority of the specimens are located in the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science (NMMNHS) in Albuquerque. Specimens, in far fewer numbers, are also located in other museums around the country, including several at the Las Cruces Museum of Nature and Science.
- Historic sites include Apache Dam, a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-era project, which continues to provide for erosion control and runoff protection. It is maintained in functional condition by the BLM, while preserving its historical value.
- One Wilderness Study Area is located within the monument, about 700 acres of the Robledo Mountains WSA. This portion of the WSA is meeting standards.



Restoration

No restoration within the PTNM is occurring at this time, although an assessment of needs will be one outcome of the RMP.

SECTION II - RECREATION FACILITIES, ROADS, AND TRAILS CONDITIONS

Overview

- There are no BLM-constructed recreational facilities within the PTNM.
- Some vehicle routes provide access to and within the PTNM, but they are not maintained vehicle roads. These routes were previously identified and designated for use following the Mimbres RMP, and are used by visitors and recreationists in 4-wheel drive vehicles. The routes were specifically designated due to their location in generally stable/consolidated material and lack of impact to surrounding resources. These routes will be re-assessed along with other options regarding vehicle routes, through the RMP.
- There is a mountain biking/hiking trail, and several vehicle routes and OHV trails designated (Robledo Mountains OHV Routes were designated in 1998).

Construction

- None planned at this time, but the need for and potential for development of facilities will be analyzed through the RMP.

Maintenance

- Minor maintenance occurs to the mountain biking/hiking trail as needed at arroyo crossings, by mountain biking visitors (rather than BLM getting notified of any repairs needed). This maintenance usually occurs after rainfall runoff events that impact trail crossings.
- Maintenance is seldom performed along the designated OHV routes because of their stable site locations and the fact that most get light use (many of the routes are only accessible by specially modified 4-wheel drive vehicles – rock crawlers). The specialty vehicles that use the routes are not limited by route conditions.

Signage

- A sign plan will be initiated commensurate with the monument RMP. OHV trails and the mountain biking/hiking trail are signed. The Robledo Mountains WSA boundary is also signed.

SECTION III - OUTREACH, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, INTERPRETATION, AND VOLUNTEERS

Outreach

- Current contact with the public is made through the BLM internet site: http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/recreation/las_cruces/trackways.html The public is encouraged to visit our managing partner, the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, since most of the trackways have been removed and transported to the museum for preservation and ongoing scientific study. The Museum offers public tours of the Trackways Collection by reservation.
- Other activities involve partnering with the LCMNH on guided field trips into the PTNM, with participation by LCDO Park Rangers.

Visitor Centers

- No visitor center exists for the monument. BLM is actively exploring opportunities to provide a visitor center experience by interpreting and curating paleontological resources within the local Las Cruces Museum of History and Science.

Environmental education

- The Las Cruces District Office [LCDO] is actively working with both the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science and the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History [LCMNH] to develop environmental education products for the monument, both onsite and within their museums.
- The LCDO continues to engage with local Las Cruces Public Schools on opportunities to learn from and utilize the PTNM. This includes understanding the natural resources on site and providing in class discussion by LCDO Park Rangers and Specialists.

Interpretation

- The LCDO is working with both the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science and the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History to develop interpretive products for the monument. Further development of interpretive products will be considered through the RMP planning process.
- The website for the monument is currently the primary interpretive



product. In 2009 it received approximately 2,500 hits.

Volunteers

- Volunteer projects consist of Site Stewardship visitation to the “Discovery Site” within the PTNM. Site Stewardship is managed through the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division’s Site Watch Program

Other Outreach Efforts

- The BLM is participating with the NMSU Geography Department through its National Parks Management Class. Students are using the monument as a case study for their class; they are studying the initiation and development of a new monument including how to initiate programs in interpretation, education, advertising, and outreach. The first class developed projects that have provided the BLM with useful ideas and suggestions that may be used in planning and outreach.

SECTION IV – SCIENCE

- Activities consist of research by the NMMNHS and private scientific investigators primarily associated with Paleozoic-era trace fossils/trackways and other associated fossil records (petrified wood, plant and marine fossils, etc.).
- Working with funding from BLM, the NMMNHS is conducting a re-inventory of the paleontological resources. This entails revisiting known localities, assessing their condition, and also identifying any new locations which have not been recorded, and assessing their resource and research value. Previous inventories have occurred for paleontological resources by private individuals. Through an Agreement with NMMNHS, those known sites are being revisited to assess their condition, resource value, and re-determine their location using current GIS protocol. In addition, the NMMNHS is working on consolidating a full inventory of paleontological resources locations, consolidation of scientific research regarding the resources of the PTNM and collecting voucher specimens as necessary.
- Through Agreement with NMMNHS, the PTNM is being inventoried for previously unknown/unrecorded paleontological locations.
- Monitoring of the routes is done by BLM during site visits to selected resource locales and during patrol of the monument by the Park Rangers.

SECTION V – PARTNERSHIPS

- LCDO is assessing viable partnerships, and although no formal ones have been developed, informal ones are being cultured with the Las Cruces Museum of Natural History (educational field trip development, outreach through museum facility); Las Cruces 4-Wheel Drive Club (monitoring of trail use and route condition assessment/reporting, interim guidance on OHV route difficulty signage, technical advice on driving in extreme trail conditions, and stewardship opportunities); and the Paleozoic Trackways Foundation (which is a potential partner, but is currently an interest group).

- Currently, the majority of fossils from the site are stored for preservation and scientific study at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History in Albuquerque. The public is encouraged to arrange for viewing of the trackways fossils through tour offered to the public through pre-arranged reservation. BLM will continue working in partnership with the museum to assure the preservation of the collection, its availability for scientific study, and its curation to the public.



SECTION VI - PLANNING AND BUSINESS PRACTICES

Planning

- BLM has prepared a Preparation Plan and a Federal Register Notice has been approved. In January, BLM initiated Scoping and the public has been very engaged by providing comments and participating in the public open house on Jan. 26, 2010.

New Units Unique Organizational Code

- LLNML03300

ARRA funds

- None associated with PTNM at this time

Budget

- Work months
- Permanent staff
 - Supervisory Recreation and Cultural Resources Supervisor (Monument Manager)
 - Outdoor Recreation Planner (8 work months)
- Part time staff
 - Park Ranger: 12 work months
 - Park Ranger: 12 work months

Total: 36 work months

Section VII - Manager's Corner

Estimated Annual Visitation to the monument is 3900 (based on an estimate of 25 people per weekend and an average of 5 people per day during the week. This includes visitation from organized/permitted events held periodically, such as tours, and general recreation visitation [i.e., mountain biking, OHV travel, etc.], and periodic range improvement maintenance and livestock condition monitoring by the grazing permittees). With recognition of the PTNM's designation, there has been a marked increase in visitation, and interest is evident through increased telephone calls to LCDO regarding the monument (primarily regarding access, resources, etc.).