



Ignacio Chavez Special Management Area

VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES:

Hiking, backpacking, mountain biking and horseback riding, to name a few, can all be enjoyed without a permit in these remote, secluded areas. Primitive camping is also allowed, but permits are required for most other uses (e.g., outfitting/guiding, commercial filming). All roads and trails are open to mountain bike use unless designated closed. Steep canyons and high rugged cliffs provide rewarding challenges for the back-country hiker. Deep meandering arroyos also offer miles of terrain in which to wander. Rock layers in the canyon walls and cliffs enhance sightseeing and photography, especially when exposed to the sun's direct rays at dawn and dusk.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) traverses the Ignacio Chavez Special Management Area (IC SMA), paralleling BLM Road 1103. An additional route for hikers and horseback riders has been identified and will provide enhanced solitude. The trail location has been marked with cairns and CDNST signs.

ABOUT WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS:

WSAs are being managed under the BLM's Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review. This means the areas are being protected to preserve their wilderness values such as solitude, naturalness and primitive recreation until the Congress either designates the areas as wilderness or releases them. When Wilderness Study Areas become designated wilderness, mountain biking is prohibited.

Preserving wilderness values is a difficult task that requires a commitment from you as well as the BLM. The challenge for land managers is to make sure the use of other resources and activities within the designated area is compatible with its wilderness resource.

Some areas within and near the Wilderness Study Area/Special Management Area (WSA/SMA) boundaries are private and/or state inholdings. Remember to get permission before you enter or cross private lands. The State of New Mexico requires a recreation permit for access to state lands—more information may be found on their web site at www.nmstatelands.org.

OJITO WILDERNESS STUDY AREA:

Historically, several human cultures have tried to carve a living from Ojito's resources. Although several types of ruins exist within the area, including those of the Anasazi, Navajo, and Hispanic cultures, very few historical records exist concerning their lives here. The rugged terrain, rocky soils and scarce water supply must have made their daily life very difficult.

FOSSILS:

Fossil remains of rare dinosaurs, plants and trees have been discovered in the Ojito WSA.

They are found in the Jurassic age Morrison Formation (around 150 million years old). The erosion process has exposed the bones of huge dinosaurs and large segments of petrified trees.

Because these fossil remains of plants and animals provide important information about life during this period, it is very important that they remain undisturbed in place until they can be collected and studied by professional paleontologists. Collection of these fossils is prohibited unless authorized by permit.

ACCESS TO OJITO:

The Ojito WSA is accessible from Albuquerque by traveling north on I-25 for approximately 16 miles and exiting on US 550. (From Santa Fe travel south approximately 40 miles.) Traveling northwest toward Cuba on US 550 from Bernalillo, the drive is approximately 20 miles. Before San Ysidro (about 2 miles), turn left onto Cabezon Road (CR 26). Follow the left fork. Use of this area is regulated only to the extent needed for resource protection and your safety.

IGNACIO CHAVEZ SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA:

The Ignacio Chavez (IC) Special Management Area (SMA) consists primarily of two Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), the Ignacio Chavez WSA (33,300 acres) and the Chamisa WSA (13,700 acres).

HISTORY:

The Ignacio Chavez SMA lies amid the remains of an array of cultural periods. Chacoan era ruins have been uncovered, and evidences of Spanish habitation during the 18th century can be found in the adobe rancheros that dot the area.

Representing the Anglo-European end of the historical spectrum is the old stage station at Ojo Azabache on the route from Santa Fe to old Fort Wingate. During the 1870s, this route ran through the area just north of the Ignacio Chavez Grant along County Road (CR) 25. Stagecoach drivers and passengers no doubt used Cabezon Peak and other nearby volcanic plugs as landmarks.

Much of the SMA lies within the Ignacio Chavez Land Grant, awarded to settlers in 1768 by the Spanish government for establishing communities. Because these communities were never developed, the U.S. Government later acquired the land grant.

ACCESS TO IGNACIO CHAVEZ SMA:

You may follow the Ojito WSA access route and continue to the IC SMA or you may follow these directions directly to CR 279. Travel northwest on US 550 from Bernalillo past San Ysidro (23 miles from Bernalillo). Continue northwest along US 550 about 20 more miles to the junction with CR 279 to the west (left). A green highway sign (labeled "San Luis - Cabezon") marks the CR 279 turnout. This paved road passes through the small village of San Luis, after which the road turns to gravel and dirt. Travel on this dirt road approximately 18 miles, crossing the bridge over the Chico Arroyo, until the road splits—CR 279 continues south to Guadalupe and BLM Road 1103 begins west. Travel on 1103 for about one mile, until CR 25 splits to the

north. BLM Road 1103 continues to the mesa top of the Ignacio Chavez Grant. If you wish to continue on to Grants, CR 25 continues for many miles until it joins with NM 53 several miles north of the town of San Mateo.

The sensitivity of the resources in the area make it necessary for the BLM to close Road 1103 to motorized vehicles at certain times of the year. Road closures are from July 1 through September 14 and again between November 14 through April 14. The road remains open to foot, horse, and bike use. During the road closure, large vehicles and horse trailers are encouraged to use the area signed "Hunters Camp," located at the junction of CR 25 and BLM Road 1103. You may obtain information on current road conditions from the BLM Cuba Office or the BLM Albuquerque Field Office. An automated information number may further assist you—(505) 761-8768.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS:

Piñon pine and oneseed juniper grow on the mesa tops in shallow soils. Color blooms in the variety of flowers such as the Rocky Mountain bee plant, sunflower, prickly pear and Indian paintbrush. Ponderosa pine and gambel oak are prevalent on the higher mesa of the IC SMA.

By day, the Ojito/IC area appears devoid of animal life, but by night the scene transforms into one of bustling activity. Mule deer browse in the piñon-juniper, and coyotes and bobcats begin their prowl for inattentive rodents. Elk and turkey can be found in the IC SMA.

Dawn brings out the birds of prey, including red-tailed hawks, kestrels and their cousins the turkey vultures.

Reptiles of the area include both prairie and Western diamondback rattlesnakes, garter

snakes, and several lizards, the most impressive being the large-collared lizard. The cliffs located in the southeast corner of the IC SMA harbor large colonies of cliff swallows.

TRAVEL TIPS:

Services and conveniences are a considerable distance away—Cuba and San Ysidro are both 20 miles from the intersection of CR 279 and US 550.

Always know where you are traveling and where you have been as it is easy to get lost in the hundreds of miles of dirt roads .

Water is a rare commodity in this dry land. In addition to what you would normally bring, add an extra gallon!

The dirt roads are passable during dry conditions but be aware they can get slippery and

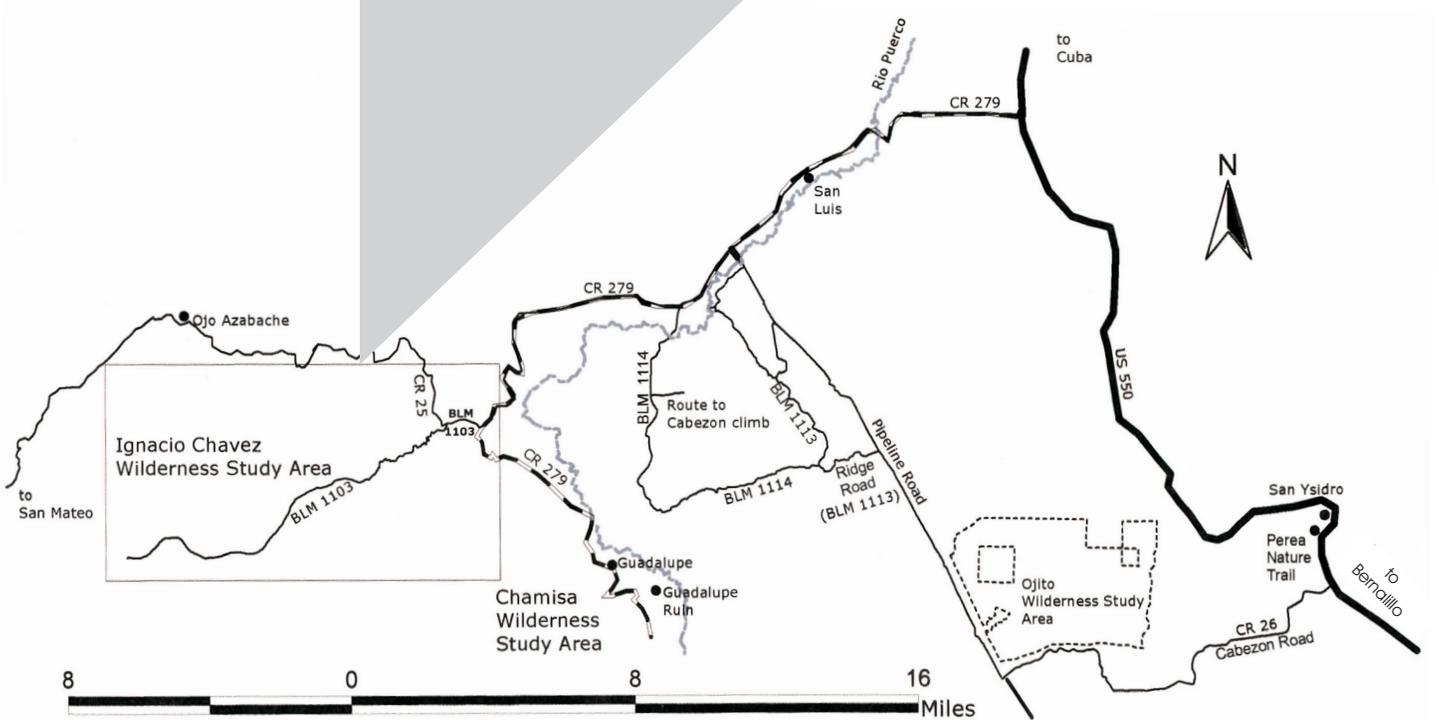
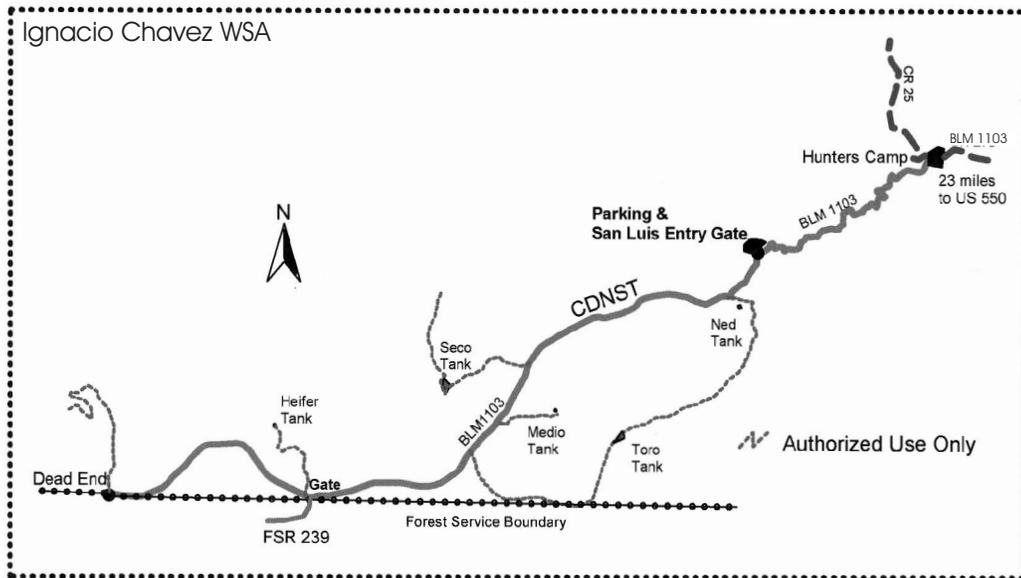
rutted during wet seasons, which normally are spring, late summer and winter.

RULES:

Know and obey the rules. All visitors and users of public lands administered by the BLM are subject to federal regulations. Violation of recreation orders and regulations are subject to punishment by fine and imprisonment according to the provisions of Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Federal Regulations: Title 43 CFR, Part 8365

Federal Register Notice: Vol. 61, No. 92/21479, Supplementary Rules for Designated Recreation Sites, Special Management Areas, and Other Public Lands in the Albuquerque Field Office, New Mexico.



For More Information Contact:

Bureau of Land Management
 Albuquerque Field Office
 435 Montano Rd. NE
 Albuquerque, NM 87107
 (505) 761-8700 or (505) 761-8768
 www.nm.blm.gov

 Please practice *Leave No Trace* camping skills and ethics. Information regarding *Leave No Trace* is available at the BLM Albuquerque Field Office.