

Sand Canyon Pueblo Trail Guide, 1990

Welcome to Sand Canyon Pueblo. This large Anasazi site was occupied in the late 13th century A.D. and is currently being investigated as part of a long-term research project sponsored by the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management. Research is being conducted under the authority of a Department of the Interior Cultural Resource Use Permit. Excavation in the pueblo has been suspended in 1990 to allow Crow Canyon staff to complete a publication on research since 1983. Excavation will resume in 1991. In 1990, Crow Canyon is excavating smaller sites on BLM lands near Sand Canyon Pueblo.

As you proceed with your visit, please stay on the marked trails and watch your footing. The entire trail is approximately ½ mile long, and the elevation of the site is 6800 feet above sea level. No public drinking water is available, but chemical toilets are stationed west of the site between May 15 and October 31.

All excavations done in past years have been backfilled. Backfilling is the most effective way to preserve the architecture of the pueblo, short of building a shelter for it. If in future years, archaeologists want to re-study or to display the excavated rooms and kivas, these parts of the site can be reopened.

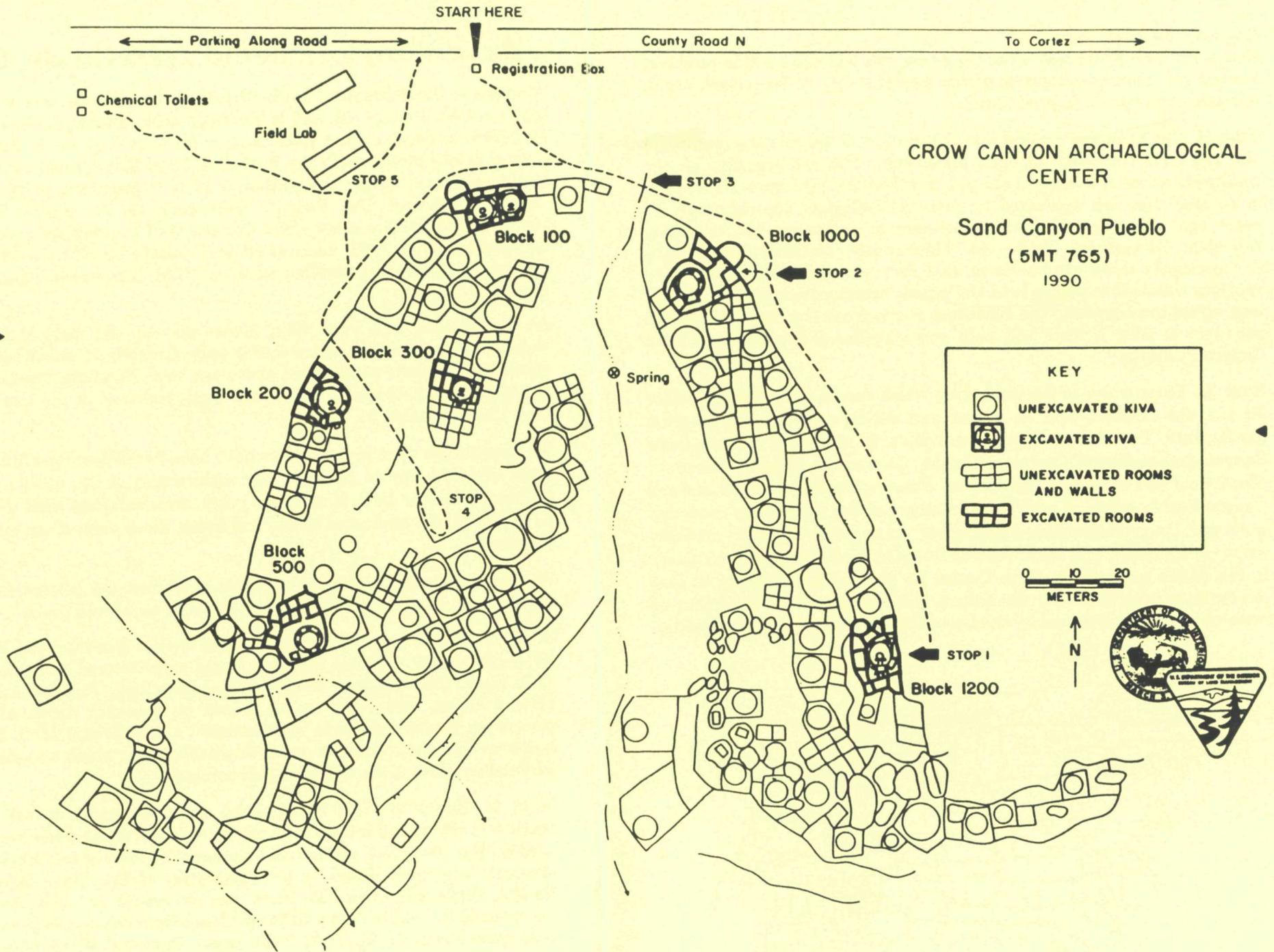
On the map inside, a number of points of interest are labeled as "stops." On the trail, these points are marked by small numbered posts.

Stop 1. This is a good point from which to view Sand Canyon Pueblo in its scenic setting. You are standing on an architectural unit (labeled the 1200 block) that has been excavated and backfilled. This unit includes a kiva, a tower, and eight rooms. Based on tree-ring dates, all of the structures in this unit were built between A.D. 1260 and 1262. Evidence indicates that they formed a domestic dwelling unit which was abandoned while other parts of the site were still occupied.

Stop 2. This is the 1000 block, which contains a kiva, several rooms, a small courtyard, and a D-shaped tower attached to the outer wall of the pueblo. The 1000 block yielded an abundance of charred roof beams, some of which have been dated by the Laboratory of Tree Ring Research in Tucson, indicating that at least one structure in this block was constructed in 1264 or later. Other evidence from the excavations showed that some rooms in the 1000 block began to go out of use before other nearby parts of the pueblo were abandoned.

Stop 3. Here, there is a break in the wall which encloses most of Sand Canyon Pueblo. Silt deposits up the draw from where you are standing indicate that the site wall may once have blocked this drainage, forming a

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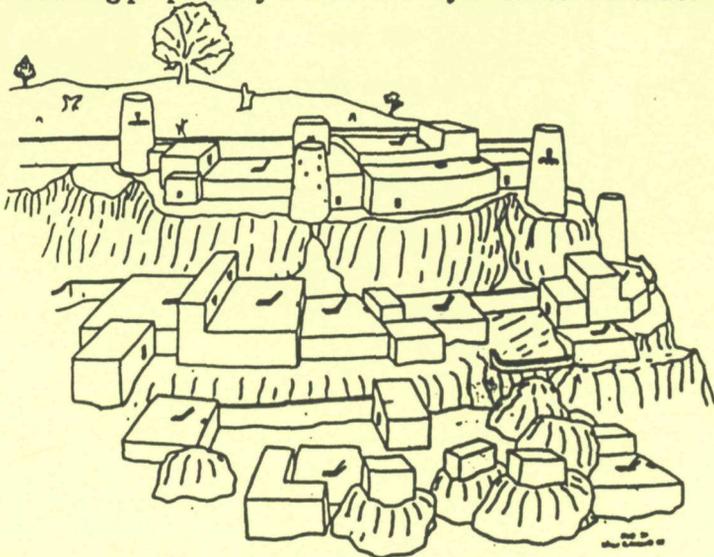


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small reservoir. If you look down the draw, you will see a cottonwood tree located on a permanent spring, which was probably an important source of water for the pueblo's inhabitants.

Stop 4. You have now crossed into the interior of the western part of the site and have traversed an open plaza area. You are standing on the southwest corner of a large, D-shaped, multi-walled structure. Behind you is an area that was excavated by non-archaeologists approximately 20 years ago. The purpose of this structure is unknown, but it closely resembles Horseshoe House in Hovenweep National Monument. Archaeologists think structures of this sort were probably involved in religious rituals that helped hold the pueblo communities together. If you look across the canyon to the southeast you can see the bare area where you were at Stop 1. This will help you visualize just how large Sand Canyon Pueblo is.

Stop 5. You are now in the field camp which serves as the lab and office for the site directors and as a rest and eating area for the program participants. The archaeological work here is sponsored by the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center of Cortez, Colorado, a private, non-profit educational and research organization. Funding for the research at Sand Canyon Pueblo comes in part from members of the public who come and work with the professional archaeologists. After study, all of the artifacts, maps, photographs, and other records from the excavations will be placed in the BLM's Anasazi Heritage Center for permanent curation, so they can continue to be studied in the future. Publications on the Sand Canyon research are being prepared by the Crow Canyon Center's archaeologists.

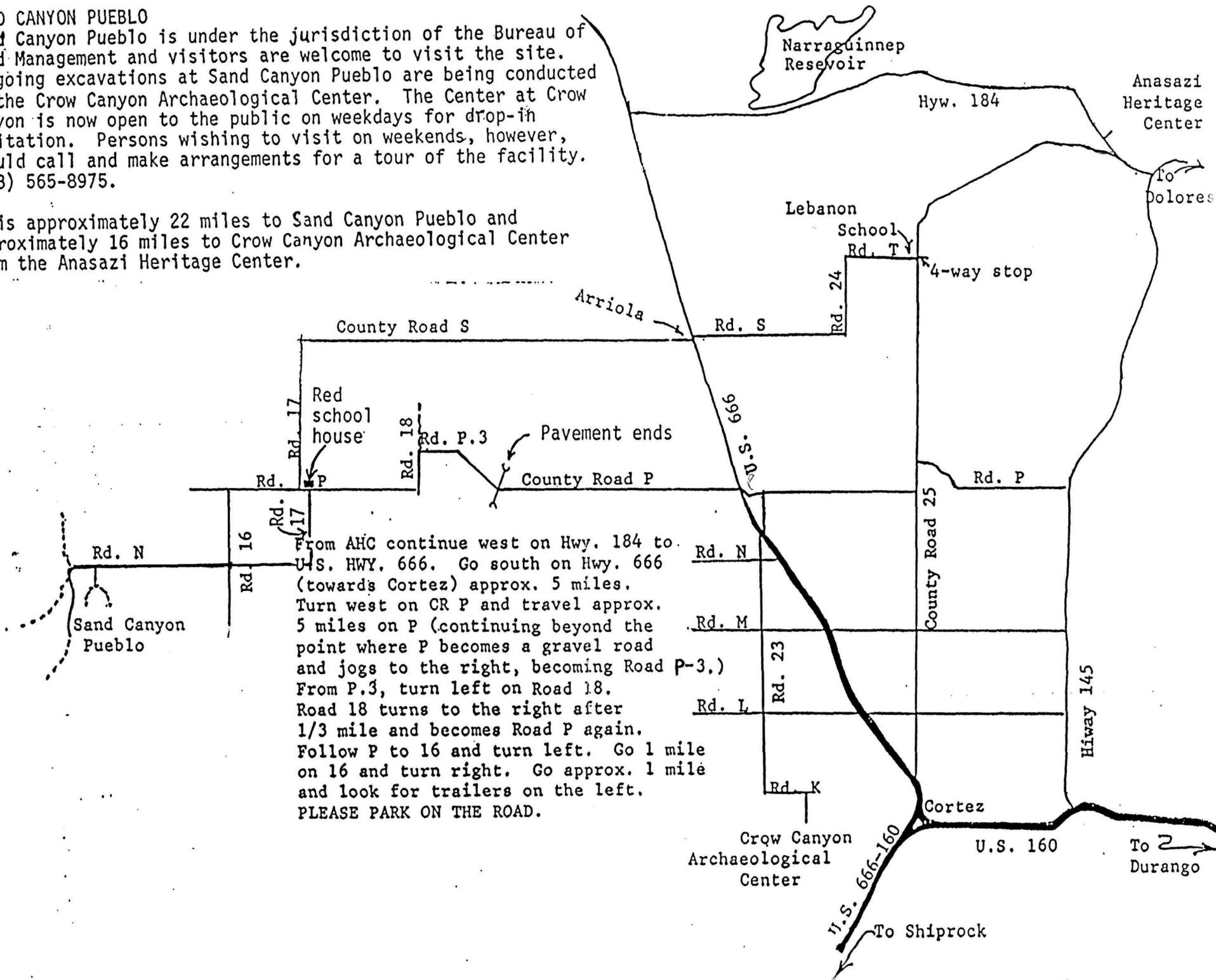


An architectural conceptualization of the 1200 block as viewed from near Stop 4. By Dr. Bruce Bradley, after a sketch by C. Straub.

SAND CANYON PUEBLO

Sand Canyon Pueblo is under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management and visitors are welcome to visit the site. On-going excavations at Sand Canyon Pueblo are being conducted by the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center. The Center at Crow Canyon is now open to the public on weekdays for drop-in visitation. Persons wishing to visit on weekends, however, should call and make arrangements for a tour of the facility. (303) 565-8975.

It is approximately 22 miles to Sand Canyon Pueblo and approximately 16 miles to Crow Canyon Archaeological Center from the Anasazi Heritage Center.



← Parking Along Road →

County Road N

To Cortez →

CROW CANYON ARCHAEOLOGICAL CENTER

Sand Canyon Pueblo
(5MT 765)
1989

