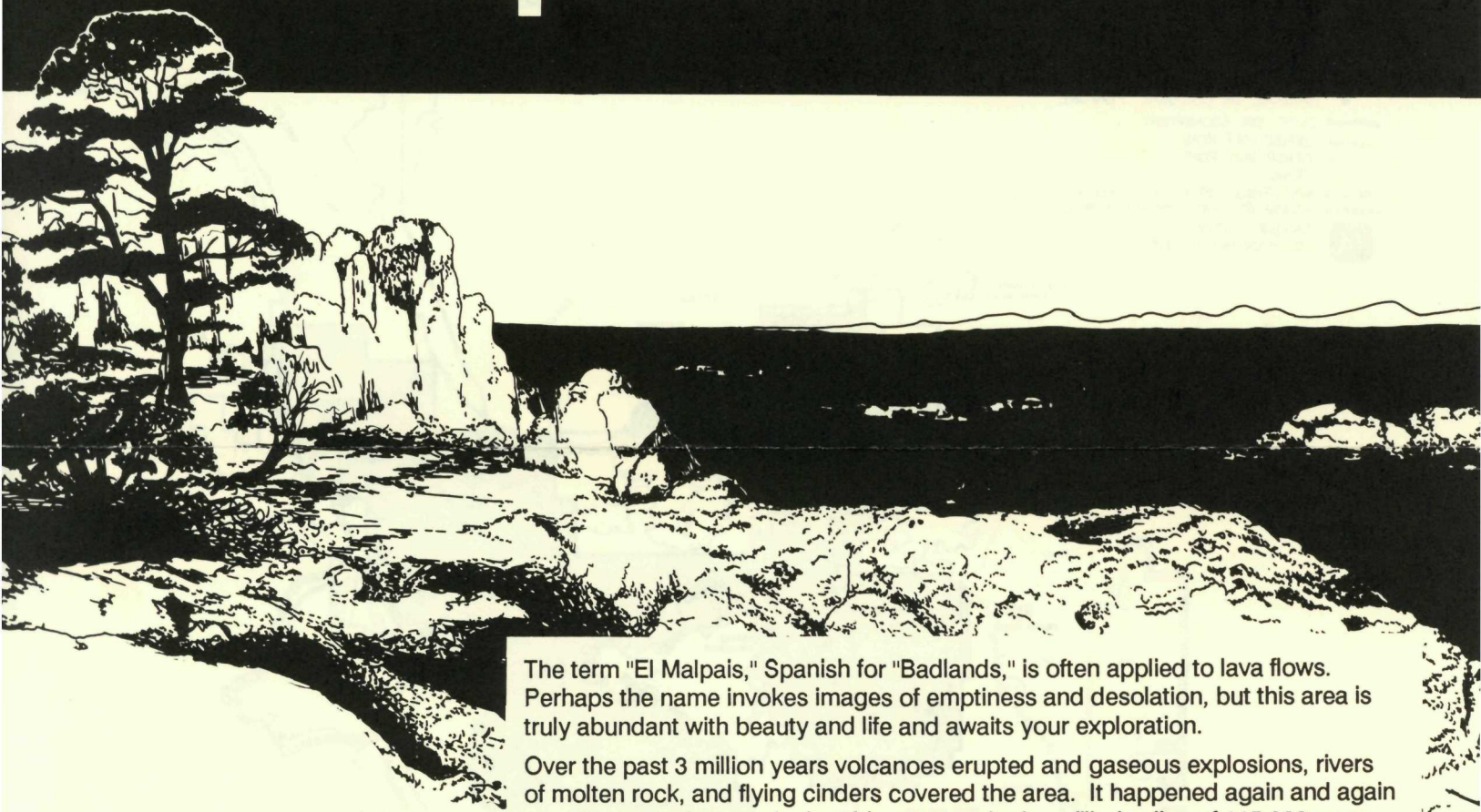


El Malpais

National Monument
National Conservation Area
U.S. Department of the Interior



The term "El Malpais," Spanish for "Badlands," is often applied to lava flows. Perhaps the name invokes images of emptiness and desolation, but this area is truly abundant with beauty and life and awaits your exploration.

Over the past 3 million years volcanoes erupted and gaseous explosions, rivers of molten rock, and flying cinders covered the area. It happened again and again over the centuries, producing this spectacular lava-filled valley of 115,000 acres. American Indians settled in the area, building pueblos nearby. They may have been here during the last eruptions, for Indian legends tell of rivers of "fire rock."

Administration

El Malpais National Monument and National Conservation Area were established in 1987 to preserve these geological and archeological resources for visitors and for study. The monument is administered by the National Park Service and the conservation area by the Bureau of Land Management, creating a joint venture by agencies within the Department of the Interior.

Management is slightly different in the two areas. In the monument, cattle grazing continues until December 31, 1997. The land will then be kept as near natural as possible. In the conservation area, compatible multiple uses, including hunting, trapping, and cattle grazing, will continue.

American Indian access for traditional cultural and religious purposes will continue.

Enjoying the Area

Plans are being made for facilities to better welcome visitors, but the great lava flow itself will remain "el malpais."

Lava is rough! Hiking can be strenuous, and a fall can be serious. It is easy to get lost. Use extreme care while exploring. Check at El Malpais Information Center for information and

backcountry permits before traveling into this natural area.

High-clearance vehicles are advisable off State Roads 53 and 117. Vehicles are restricted to existing, designated roads, except in wilderness areas where vehicles and mechanized equipment are prohibited.

Preservation

The people of the United States, through Congress, set aside this special area so our children and our children's children can enjoy it as we do. The BLM and NPS can't do it alone. We need your help. If you see someone removing objects, or defacing features or facilities, notify the nearest park ranger or law enforcement agency.

This is especially true of archeological features. To learn all we can about the earliest inhabitants, an artifact must not only be left, it must be left where it was found. Location is very important to archeological research. The penalties for collecting or disturbing these resources, which belong to all Americans, include fines of up to \$10,000 and/or two years in jail for first offenses.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

El Malpais Information Center
620 E. Santa Fe Street
Grants, NM 87020
Telephone (505) 285-5406

