



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

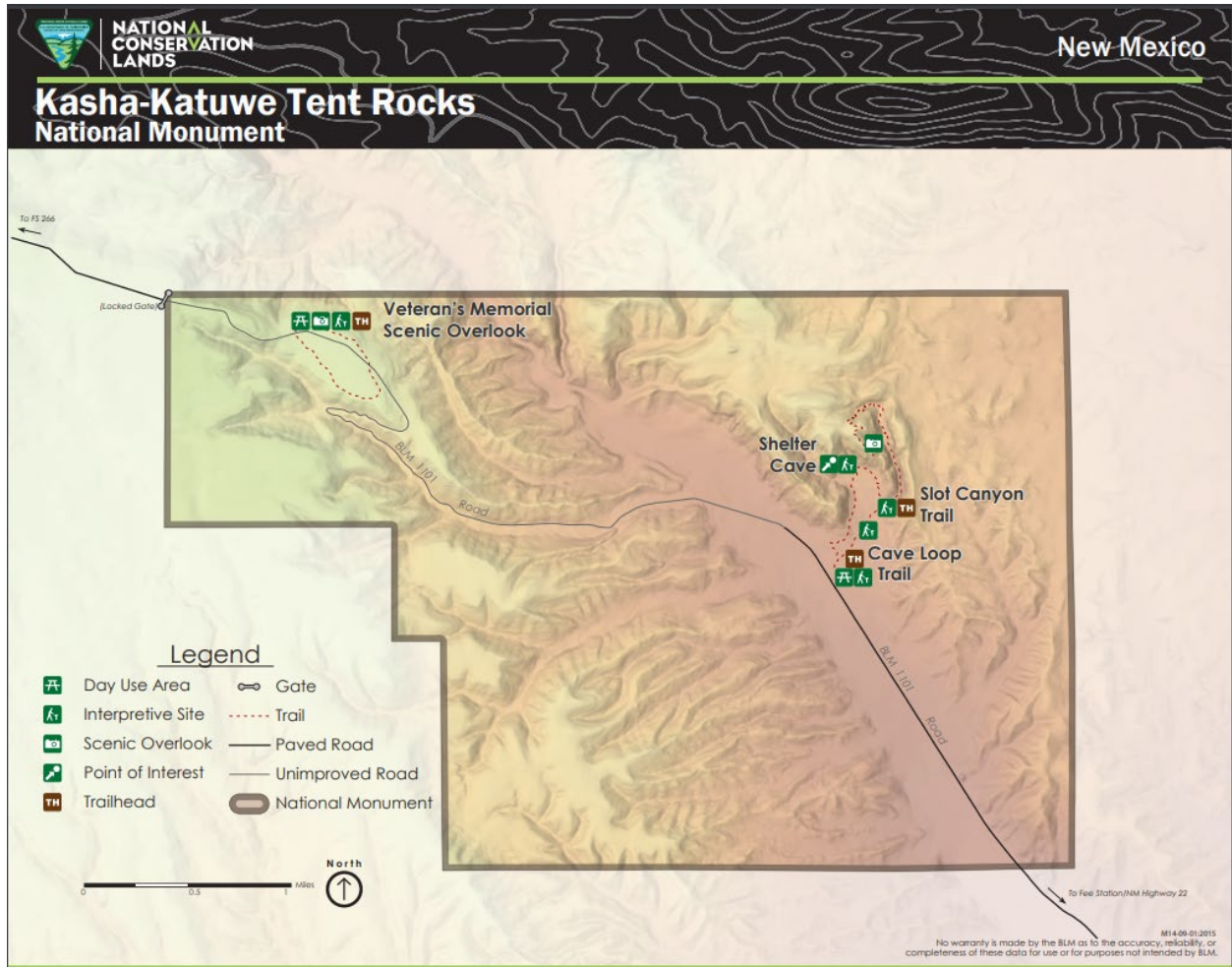
New Mexico
FY2023 Annual Manager's Report

Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks

National Monument



Map



Accomplishments

Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument (Monument) has been closed for almost four years. Prior to COVID, the Monument provided a diverse outdoor recreation experience for upwards of 100,000 visitors a year. 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 an agreement with the Pueblo de Cochiti (Pueblo) under which the Pueblo would provide day-to-day operations for visitor services at the Monument on behalf of the BLM. Throughout FY2023, BLM and the Pueblo, met frequently to discuss specific details of this agreement.

This unique agreement would allow the agency to honor our commitment in providing Recreation & Visitor Services for individuals, groups, educational institutions, and permittees visiting the Monument.



Overlook of the tent formations at the top of Slot Canyon Trail

Challenges

The RPFO continues to receive many inquiries from the public regarding the reopening status. Our blm.gov website for the Monument is consistently the most visited website for BLM New Mexico. One of the primary concerns is public access to the Monument.

The initial closure of the Monument was to reduce COVID-19 exposure to the gateway community of Pueblo de Cochiti. RPFO continues to work in close cooperation with the Pueblo government in developing a plan to reopen. Both the Pueblo and the RPFO have taken a hard look at long-standing issues including over-visitation, long wait times, staffing needs, and the ability to provide resource protection.



Monument is closed at this time

Visitors

Over the years, the Monument has become popular beyond the local community. The Monument receives visitors from all over the nation and across the world. Average annual use grew exponentially. Prior to the current closure, the Monument saw over 110,000 visitors annually from 2015 to 2019. This visitation rate brought noticeable resource degradation, safety issues, and a lower quality of visitor experience. The Pueblo also expressed concern for their community's privacy due to the high number of visitors passing through their community on the way to the Monument.

Due to the ongoing closure since 2020, the Monument saw no visitation in FY 23.

Upon reopening, RPFO and the Pueblo plan to reduce visitation rate to match the recommendations of the Monument Resource Management Plan (RMP), at around 50,000 visitors per year. The RPFO is seeking to implement a reservation system with Recreation.gov to manage visitor entry into the Monument. Reducing the annual visitation will allow the agency to protect resources and improve the quality experience for the visitors.



Youth enjoying the Monument

Partnerships

As a part of the Connecting with Communities: BLM Recreation Strategy, 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 RPF0 and the Pueblo, not only for tribal consultation, but also for input on 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 Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the monument includes additional objectives between 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 the objectives in the RMP are met and the Pueblo’s concerns are sought out, recognized, and addressed. The RPF0 continues regular tribal consultation with the Pueblo to address long standing issues such as supplemental rules, agreements, and access.

A Federal Register Notice was issued on March 27, 2020, temporarily closing the Monument to the public for fifteen days each year, to allow for Pueblo de Cochiti cultural observances and routine BLM maintenance. The fifteen closure dates were as follows: January 1; January 6; Friday before Easter; Easter Saturday; Easter Sunday; Monday after Easter; May 3; July 13, July 14; July 25; November 1; Thanksgiving Day; December 24; December 25; and December 31. The notice has since expired and RPF0 is working with the Pueblo to confirm future closure dates that may differ from those in the past. The Pueblo may request additional dates to ensure privacy and respect for traditional practices.

Science

The Monument Science Plan was completed in August 2020. No further action on science related projects is completed to date. RPF0 staff and Pueblo de Cochiti continue to monitor resources within the Monument throughout the closure.



Cholla cactus growing alongside a trail



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