

# CHIRICAHUA

A black and white photograph of a desert landscape. The scene is dominated by tall, layered rock formations, likely sandstone, with distinct horizontal strata. In the foreground, a mule with a saddle is standing on a rocky path. To the left, a person is perched on a rock ledge. The background shows more of the rugged terrain under a clear sky.

NATIONAL MONUMENT • ARIZONA

# CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL MONUMENT

Weirdly beautiful pinnacles and columns eroded in volcanic rocks high in a forested range, which forms a mountain island in a desert sea.

Unbelievably tall and slender pinnacles, startling likenesses of giant beasts and men, grotesque and weird figures such as might inhabit another world—all these and many more, carved by Nature in volcanic rock, are crowded into 17 spectacular square miles of ridge and canyon on the west flank of the Chiricahua Mountains.

Rising steeply from the grasslands of southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, the Chiricahuas present a verdant, forested island in a brown sea of desert. Many varieties of trees, shrubs, and flowering herbs clothe steep canyon walls. Shady glens, alive with birds, are frowned upon by rows of strange massive spires, turrets, and battlements in this fascinating wonderland of rocks.

## Geological Story

What geological forces created these striking and peculiar pinnacles and balanced rocks? Geologists explain that millions of years ago volcanic activity was extensive throughout this region. A series of explosive eruptions covered the level area with layers of volcanic rock fragments. Many years elapsed between such periods of activity, resulting in a series of blankets, layer upon layer. Since the eruptions varied in

magnitude, the resulting deposits were of different thickness.

Finally, the eruptions ceased, and were followed by movements in the earth's crust which slowly lifted and tilted great rock masses to form mountains. The stresses responsible for the movements caused a definite pattern of vertical cracks. Storms and other agencies of erosion, especially running water carrying small particles of rock, immediately set to work on the long, slow task of wearing down these mountains. Shallow canyons became deeper and more rugged as time passed. Weathered rock formed soil which collected in pockets, and plant life gained a foothold.

Where previous volcanic activity had spread sheets of lava, the mountains were now capped with layers of volcanic rock. Along the vertical cracks and lines of horizontal weakness, erosion began its persistent work. Cracks were widened to form fissures; fissures grew to breaches. Undercutting slowly took place. Gradually the lava masses were cut by millions of erosional channels into blocks of a multitude of sizes and shapes to be further sculptured by the elements.

Erosion is still going on slowly and persistently among the great pillared cliffs of the monument. Some of the most exposed portions have already been worn away.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

Pedestal or balanced rocks have formed and fallen; others are tottering; more are just taking shape. Within the span of a human life, only minor changes may be noticed, but with the passage of the centuries the face of Nature is ever changing.

Although the spectacular erosional remnants and the massive columnar structure of the cliffs will impress you even if you hurry through, you will see much more of geological interest if you can stop and use the trail. Here and there are exposed beds of volcanic ash and cinders, indicating the explosive nature of some of the ancient eruptions. Road construction has uncovered shale which was once the mud of a lake bed. One trail is strewn with "volcanic hailstones" weathered out of a ledge composed of millions of marblelike pellets firmly cemented together into a peculiar "peanut-brittle" rock.

### Plant and Animal Life

Because of its location as a mountainous island in a sea of arid grassland, the Chiricahua Range affords a haven for a multitude of plants and animals of many varieties. Winter snows and summer rains result in springs and small streams. Dense vegetation covers the shaded canyon bottoms and the cool north slopes of the higher elevations. In contrast, south exposures feel the full heat of the summer sun and have plants characteristic of the desert. Red-stemmed manzanitas and bark-shedding madrones rub branches with the chalky-white limbs of the sycamore and the feathery gray foliage of the Arizona cypress. Green slopes, covered by chaparral of scrub oak and manzanita, face open hillsides dotted with a desert vegetation of yuccas, century plants, and cactuses. Seasonal changes bring with them many varieties of wildflowers.

Arizona whitetail deer are numerous in the Chiricahuas, and in the monument, where they are protected, they become accustomed to man and are frequently seen. Coatimundi and peccary are increasing in numbers. Rodents are common, as are birds of many species. Each vegetative belt and

plant association has its own distinctive animal population, some of which are unique because of the relative and long-established isolation of the Chiricahua Range.

### Historical Background

What student of American history has not heard of Geronimo, famous warrior of the Chiricahua Apache Indians? When, in 1886, Geronimo and his band finally surrendered to United States soldiers, there ended one of the most stubborn phases of aboriginal resistance to white domination. The Chiricahua Mountains and their neighboring ranges were the ancestral home of the nomadic Apache Indians. Living mainly on wild animals and native plants, these resourceful people moved from place to place depending upon the requirements of the season and the supply of food. Occasionally they raided the farmer Indians of the desert valleys, and with the coming of the Spaniards, they found increased incentive to pillage the European cattle, horses, and grains introduced by the white men.

Stolen horses greatly increased the power and widened the range of Indian activities, and the southeastern corner of what is now Arizona became an Apache stronghold. With the Gadsden Purchase in 1853 and the opening of settlement of the region to United States citizens, the Apache raiders became more and more a hazard. United States troops were dispatched to the Southwest to protect settlers, prospectors, travelers, and the mail- and passenger-carrying stages of the Butterfield Route which were often attacked. Cavalry camps and bases were established. One of the most famous of these, Fort Bowie, established in 1862, commanded strategic Apache Pass at the end of the Chiricahua Mountains, north of the monument. From 1860 until 1872, the Chiricahua Apaches under the leadership of the wily Cochise matched the strategy of the soldiers.

In 1876, the Chiricahua Apaches were finally rounded up and placed on a reservation, but hostilities continued to flare up when

bands left the reservation to attack travelers and pillage isolated ranches. Geronimo, who was the most persistent and cunning of the leaders, was captured in 1886. This ended the organized resistance of the Chiricahua Apaches, but "Big Foot" Massai staged several one-man escapades in later years. Cochise Head, just north of the monument, and Massai Point and Massai Canyon, within its boundaries, immortalize the names of two of the famous Apaches of the Chiricahua group.

## The Monument

Chiricahua National Monument, established by Presidential proclamation on April 18, 1924, has an area of approximately 10,481 acres of Federal lands. Elevations within the monument range from 5,160 to 7,365 feet above sea level. The monument entrance, which is on the west, is reached by roads from Bowie and Willcox, or by paved roads from Douglas and Bisbee.

Geronimo, famous warrior of the Chiricahua Apaches.

## About Your Visit

You may obtain information and can register at monument headquarters, about 1 mile beyond the entrance. There is a small exhibit room here, and free interpretive service is provided. When personnel is available, visitors are accompanied to points of interest by park rangers who explain the geologic phenomena.

A paved mountain road will take you up scenic Bonita Canyon to Massai Point from which you can get an extensive view of the monument and of the Sulfur Springs Valley to the west and San Simon Valley on the east. The geological story is told at the Massai Point Exhibit Building. For added enjoyment, we suggest you take one or more of the following trips:

*Massai Point Trail.*—A self-guiding trail. Interesting features include a balanced rock, lookout point with telescope, and Transition Life Zone plants. Secure leaflet at the Exhibit Building. Time, 20 to 30 minutes.

*Echo Canyon.*—One of the most scenic sections of the monument. The walk of 1¼ miles to Echo Park is very spectacular.

*Heart of Rocks.*—A nice 4- or 5-hour hike to interesting rock formations, such as Punch and Judy and Big Balanced Rock. Take water.

*Sugar Loaf Peak.*—One of the highest points in the monument—extensive view of entire region. From Sugar Loaf parking area, 1 mile by trail.

*Footbill Forest Trail.*—A self-guiding trail, starting at the museum parking area, will take you past plants of the Upper and Lower Sonoran Life Zones. Time, 15 to 20 minutes.

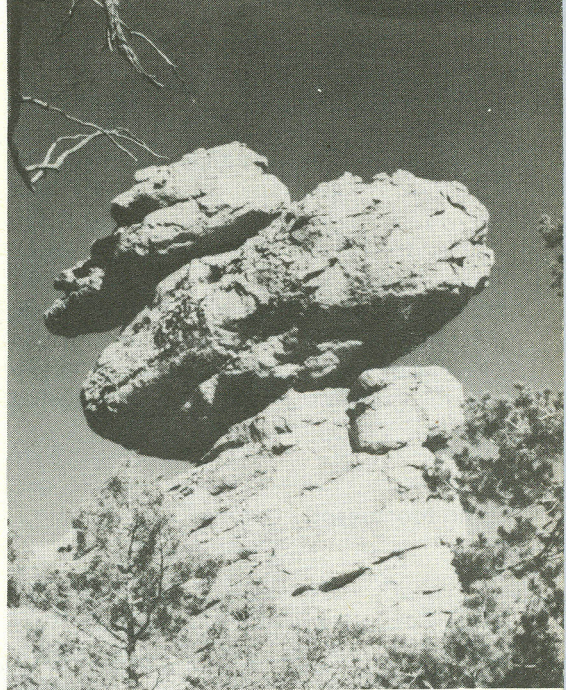
*Horseback Trip.*—Horses are available at the Faraway Ranch and all trails are open to horseback parties.

There is a campground in Bonita Canyon, one-half mile above monument headquarters, at 5,340 feet elevation. Drinking water, fireplaces, wood, and picnic tables at 30 campsites; restrooms, showers, and laundry room are centrally located. Campers may heat water for showers or laundry in a wood-





"Punch and Judy."



"Duck on a Rock."

burning waterheater. Although the campground is open all year, shower rooms may be closed during freezing weather.

Temperatures are generally moderate—the mean daily temperature in January is 40° and in July, 74°. Most of the average yearly precipitation of 18 inches occurs during the rainy season of July and August. Except for light snowfall in winter, the rest of the year is comparatively dry.

There are no shelter cabins in the campground. All camping and picnicking in the monument is restricted to the established campground area. As wood is provided at the campground, the gathering of firewood in the monument is prohibited.

Several of the campsites are large enough to accommodate housetrailer, but no special facilities, such as electricity, are provided. There is a maximum 30-day limit on camp-

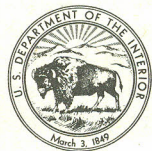
ing, which may be reduced during periods of heavy use. All pets must be leashed or kept in a vehicle. No fee is charged at the monument.

Meals and lodging can be obtained at Silver Spur Ranch and housekeeping cabins and meals at the Faraway Ranch, both of which are on private lands not under Federal jurisdiction.

*Hunting, or injury to any plant, animal, or feature of the monument, is prohibited.*

### Administration

Chiricahua National Monument is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Dos Cabezas, Ariz., is in immediate charge.

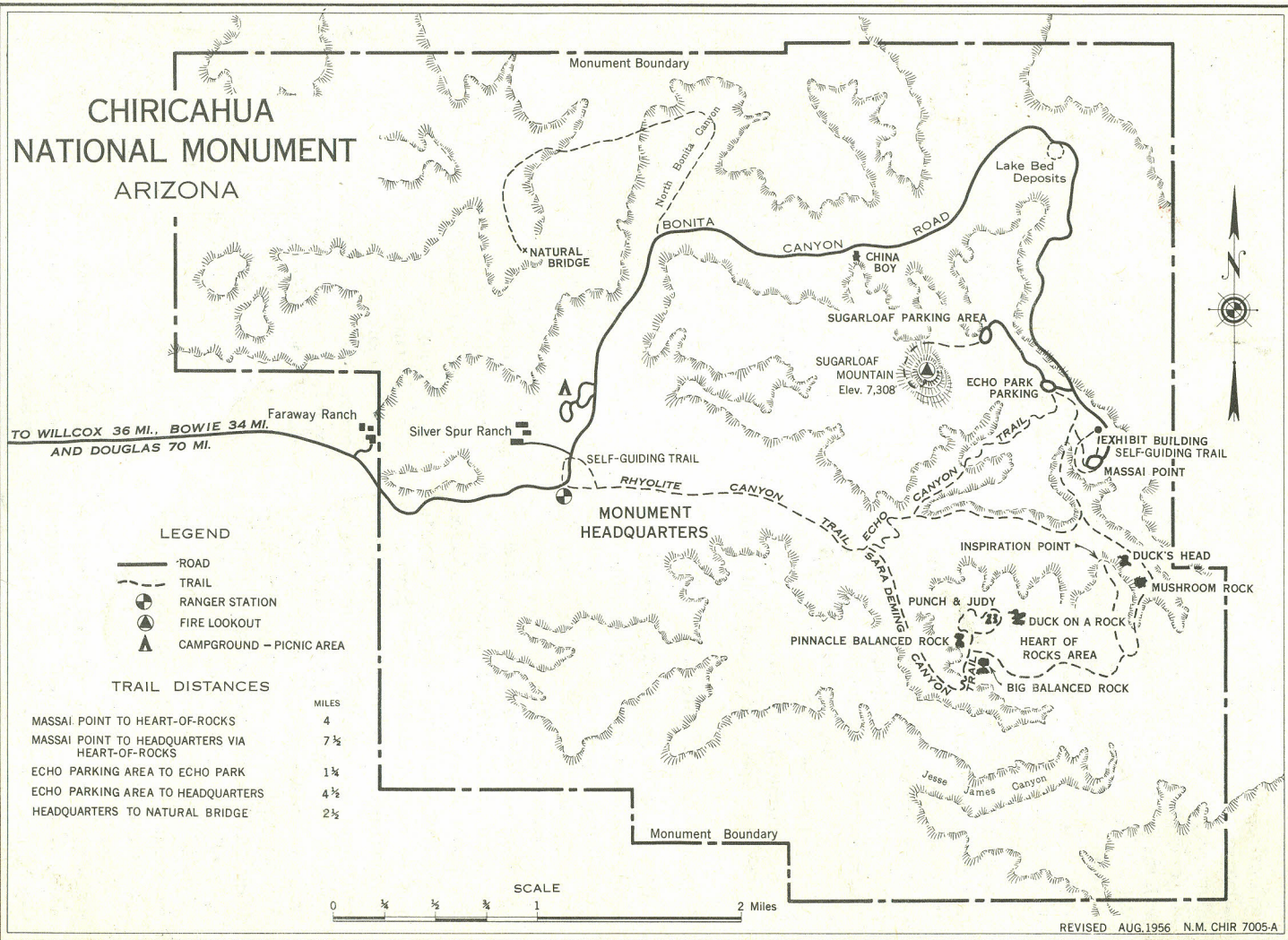


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Fred A. Seaton, *Secretary*  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*



# CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL MONUMENT

## ARIZONA



TO WILLCOX 36 MI., BOWIE 34 MI.  
AND DOUGLAS 70 MI.

### LEGEND

- ROAD
- - - TRAIL
- ⊙ RANGER STATION
- ⊙ FIRE LOOKOUT
- ▲ CAMPGROUND - PICNIC AREA

### TRAIL DISTANCES

	MILES
MASSAI POINT TO HEART-OF-ROCKS	4
MASSAI POINT TO HEADQUARTERS VIA HEART-OF-ROCKS	7 ½
ECHO PARKING AREA TO ECHO PARK	1 ¼
ECHO PARKING AREA TO HEADQUARTERS	4 ½
HEADQUARTERS TO NATURAL BRIDGE	2 ½

### SCALE

