

Chiricahua

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, alternating with varying periods of inactivity, covered the area with layers of volcanic rock fragments. Because the eruptions varied in magnitude, the deposits were of different thicknesses.

Finally, the eruptions ceased. They 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. Along the vertical cracks and lines of horizontal weakness, erosion (the effects of weathering and of running water carrying small particles of rock) began its persistent work—the long, slow process of wearing down the mountains. Cracks were widened to form fissures; and fissures grew to breeches. Undercutting slowly took place.

Gradually the lava masses were cut by millions of erosional channels into blocks of a myriad of sizes and shapes, to be further sculptured by the elements. Shallow canyons became deeper and more rugged as time passed. Weathered rock formed soil, which collected in pockets; and plants thus gained a foothold.

Erosion is still going on slowly and persistently among the great pillared cliffs of the monument. Some of the most exposed parts have already been worn away. 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 centuries the face of the land is ever changing.

Although the curious 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 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.

Plants and Animals

Because of their situation as a mountainous island in a sea of arid grassland, the Chiricahua Mountains afford 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 white-tailed 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 Mountains.

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 Indian 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.

These 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. "Big Foot" Massai, however, 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 nearly 17 square miles. Elevations within the monument range from 5,160 to 7,365 feet above sea level. The monument entrance, which is on the west side, is reached by roads from Bowie and Willcox, or by paved roads from Douglas and Bisbee.

About Your Visit

You may obtain information and may register at monument headquarters, about 1 mile beyond the entrance. There is a small ex-

Geronimo, famous warrior of the Chiricahua Apaches.



hibit 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 to 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 outstanding.

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.

Sugarloaf Peak.—One of the highest points in the monument, with an extensive view of entire region. It is 1 mile from Sugarloaf parking area by trail.

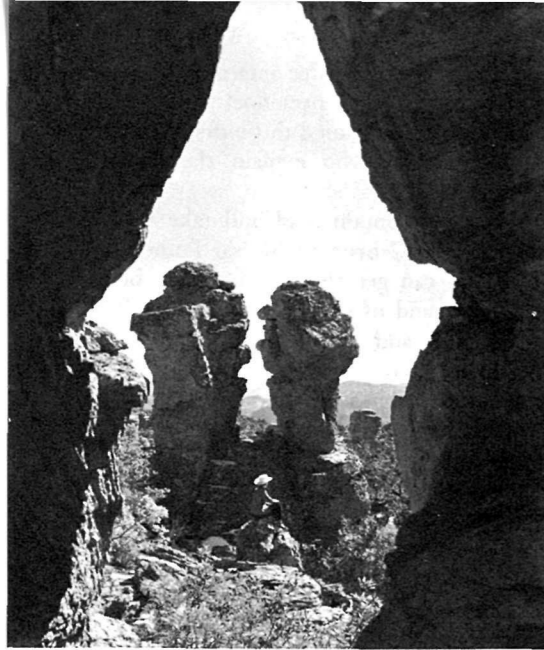
Footbill Forest Trail.—A self-guiding trail, starting at the museum parking area, will take you past plants of the Upper and Lower Sonoran life zone. Time, 15 to 20 minutes.

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

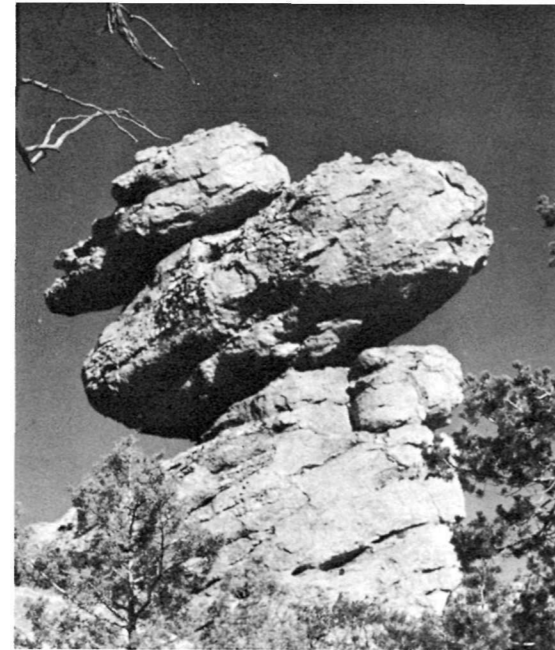
There is a campground in Bonita Canyon, one-half mile from monument headquarters, at 5,340 feet elevation. Drinking water, fireplaces, and picnic tables at 37 campsites; rest-rooms are centrally located. Camping and picnicking are restricted to the campground area. Fireplaces are of the charcoal-burning type, and campers are encouraged to bring their own charcoal. The gathering of firewood is prohibited.

Housetrainers can be accommodated, but no special facilities, such as electricity, are available. There is a 14-day limit on camping

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.



"Punch and Judy."



"Duck on a Rock."

during the season of heaviest use; this limit may be extended at other times. All pets must be leashed or kept in a vehicle.

Meals and lodging can be obtained at Silver Spur Ranch, housekeeping cabins and meals at the Faraway Ranch; both ranches are on private lands.

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.

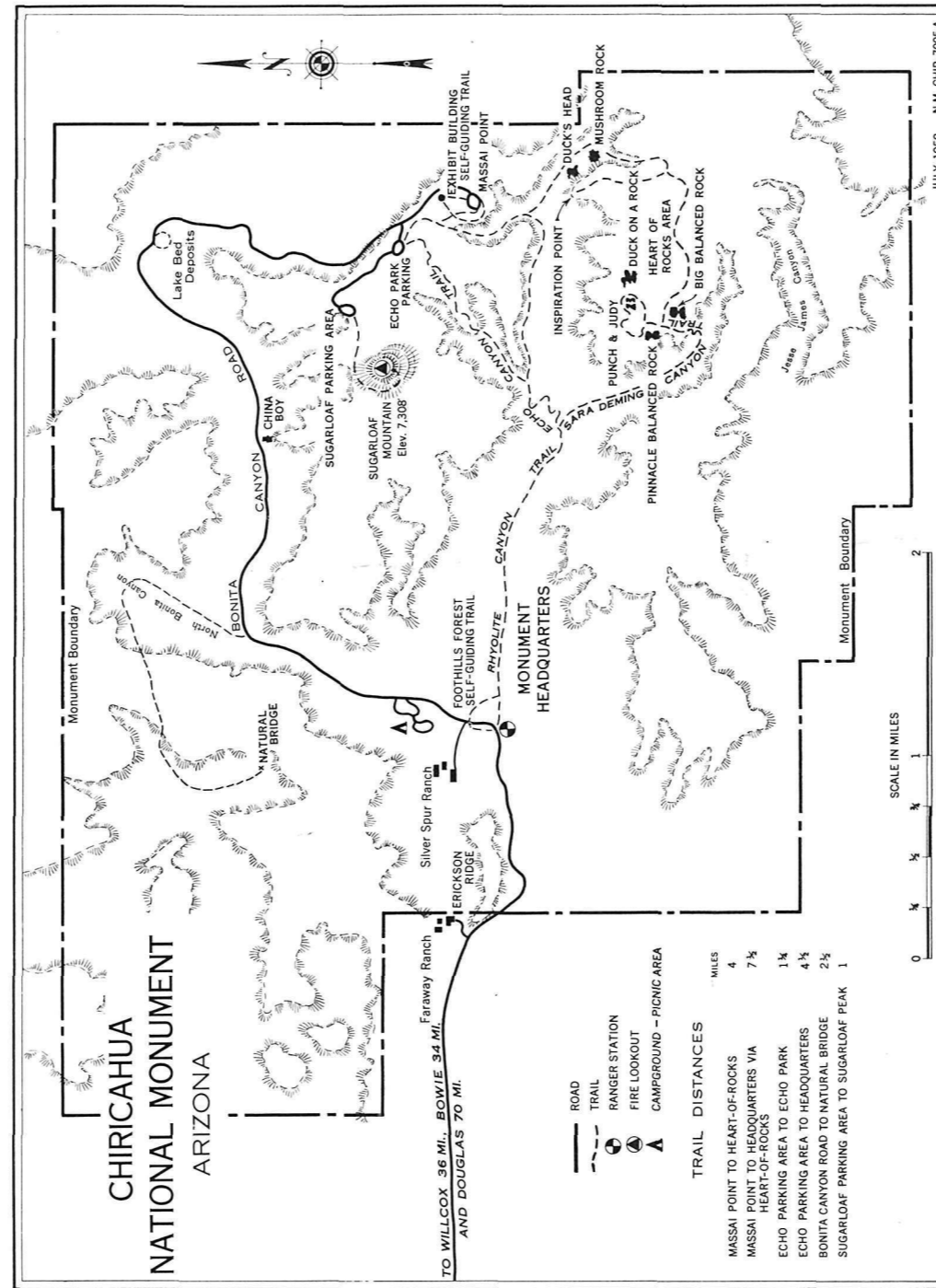
Hunting is prohibited. Also illegal is the disturbance of any animal, plant, or feature.

Mission 66

Mission 66 is a program designed to be completed by 1966 which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the National Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Administration

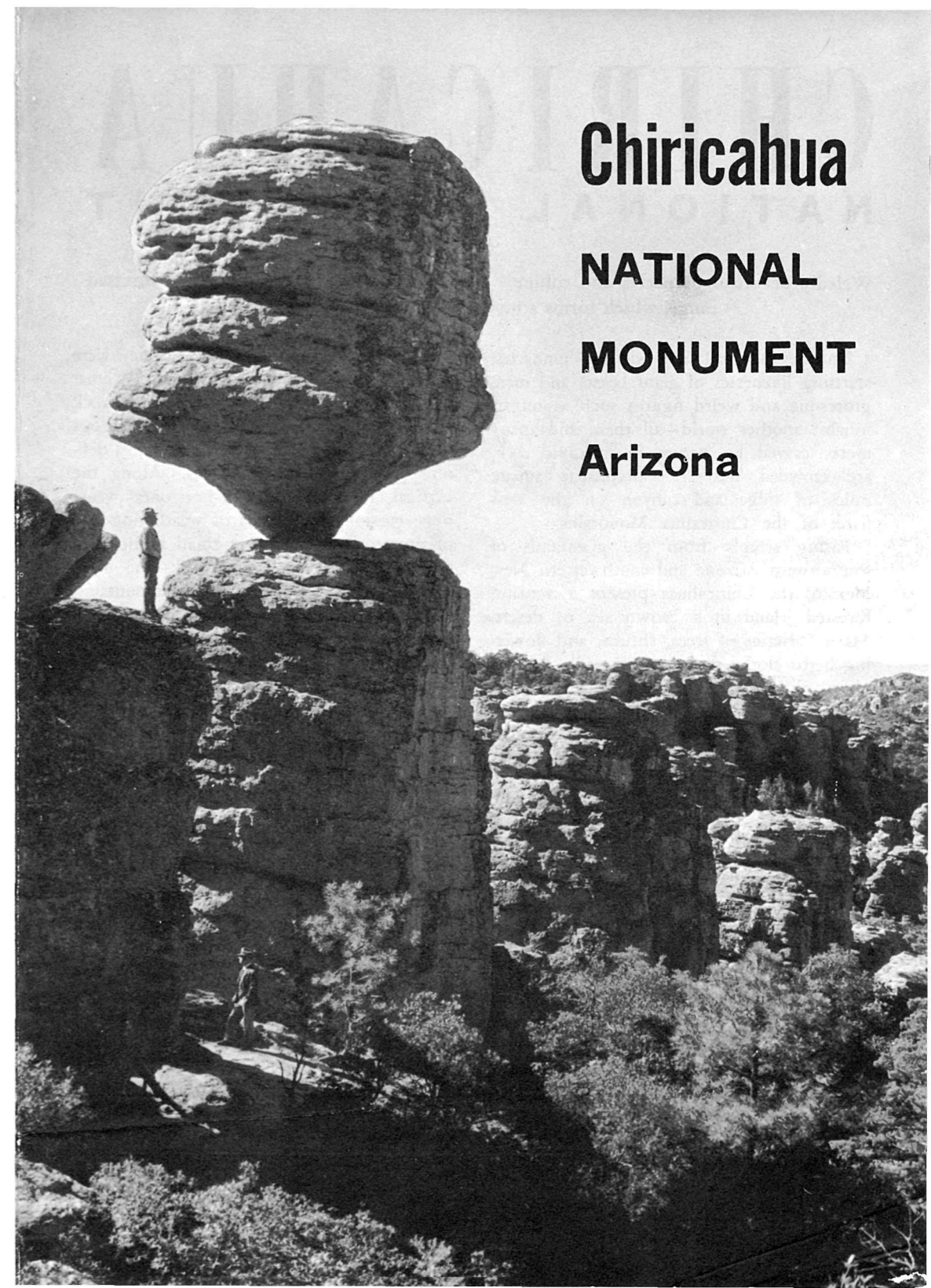
Chiricahua National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Dos Cabezas, Ariz., is in immediate charge.



Revised 1962

COVER: *Big Balanced Rock, in Heart of Rocks area.*

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1962 OF—633160



Chiricahua NATIONAL MONUMENT Arizona



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

