



# CHIRICAHUA

NATIONAL MONUMENT • Arizona



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 the monument's 17 square miles of ridge and canyon on the west flank of the Chiricahua Mountains.

Rising steeply from the dry 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 sheltered by rows of strange massive spires, turrets, and battlements in this fascinating wonderland of rocks.

#### Story of the Rocks **CHIRICAHUA**

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 periods of inactivity, covered the area with layers of white-hot ash that welded into volcanic rock. 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 planes of horizontal weakness, erosion by weathering and running water began its persistent work. Cracks were widened to form fissures; and fissures grew to breaches. At the same time, undercutting slowly took place.

Gradually the lava masses were cut by millions of erosional channels into blocks of myriad 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. 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 shows vast changes.

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 trails. Here and there are exposed beds of volcanic ash, indicating the explosive nature 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, some 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 species. Elevations in the monument range from 5,160 to 7,365 feet, causing a corresponding range in climatic conditions and types of vegetation dependent upon them. Winter snows and summer rains feed 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 produce plants characteristic of the desert. Red-stemmed manzanitas and bark-shedding madrones mingle with the chalky-white limbs of the sycamore and the feathery gray foliage of the Arizona cypress. Green north-facing slopes, covered by chaparral of scrub oak and manzanita, face open southern exposures dotted with a desert vegetation of yuccas, centuryplants, and cactuses. Seasonal changes bring with them many varieties of wildflowers.

Arizona white-tailed deer are numerous in the Chiricahuas; in the monument, where they are protected, they have become accustomed to man and are frequently seen. Coatis and peccaries are increasing. Rodents are common, as are birds of many species. Each vegetative belt and plant association has its own distinctive animals, some of which are unique because of the relative and long-established isolation of the Chiricahua Mountains.

#### Indians of the Chiricahuas

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.

Mountain ranges of the Southwest were the ancestral home of the nomadic Apache Indians. These resourceful people lived mainly on wild animals and native plants. Shortly after the coming of the Spaniards, Apaches moved into the Chiricahua Mountains, from which they descended to plunder the cattle, horses, and grains introduced by the white men.

These horses greatly increased the mobility and widened the range of Indian activities, so that what is now the southeastern corner of Arizona became an Apache stronghold. By the late 1700's, however, the Chiricahuas had been reduced to a small group.

With the Gadsden Purchase in 1853 and opening of the region to settlement by United States citizens, these Apaches became more troublesome. 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, led by the wily Cochise, and their allies matched the strategy of the soldiers.

In 1872, the Chiricahua Apaches were finally rounded up and placed on a reservation. But bands left the reservation to attack travelers and pillage isolated ranches. In 1876, the Chiricahuas were moved north to the San Carlos Reservation. Resistance of the Chiricahua Apaches did not end until 1886, when an escaped band under Geronimo surrendered near the Mexican border. "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 famous Apaches of the Chiricahua group.





### About Your Visit

The entrance, which is on the west side of the monument can be reached by road from Bowie, Willcox, Douglas, and Bisbee.

Your first stop should be at monument headquarters, about 1 mile beyond the entrance. Here, National Park Service personnel will explain the more interesting features of the monument and suggest ways that you may see them. Here, too, are exhibits that graphically describe the history and natural history of the area. This preparation will help you appreciate what you will see along the scenic drive and trails.

**Massai Point Drive.** This paved mountain road leads up Bonita Canyon to Massai Point, from which you can get an extensive view of the monument and of Sulphur Springs Valley to the west and San Simon Valley to the east. At the Massai Point Exhibit Building, you can learn about local geology.

More than 15 miles of trails provide views of all the monument's features. For your safety, you are requested to stay on the trails, whether you are hiking or on horseback. Other tips: Wear comfortable shoes, take water and food on the longer trips, plan to be back before dark, and set an easy pace.

**Massai Point Trail.** You can obtain a guide booklet for this trail at the register box at the Massai Point Exhibit Building. Features along the trail include a balanced rock, lookout point with telescope, and plants of the Transition life zone. Walking time: 20 to 30 minutes.

**Echo Canyon.** The 1¼-mile walk through Echo Canyon to Echo Park presents one of the most scenic sections of the monument. Walking time: 1 hour, one way.

**Heart of Rocks.** This 4- or 5-hour hike leads to such interesting rock formations as Punch and Judy and Big Balanced Rock. You should carry water on this trip.

**Sugarloaf Peak.** A 1-mile trail from the Sugarloaf parking area will bring you to the peak, one of the highest points in the monument and one that offers exciting views in all directions. Walking time: 40 minutes, one way.

**Foothills Forest Trail.** This self-guiding trail, starting at the headquarters parking area, will take you

among plants of the Upper and Lower Sonoran life zones. Walking time: 15 to 20 minutes.

**Horseback trips.** Horses are available at Faraway Ranch, and most trails are open to horseback parties.

### Climate

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

### Camping and Accommodations

A campground is located in Bonita Canyon, one-half mile from monument headquarters and at an elevation of 5,340 feet. Drinking water, fireplaces, and tables are provided for 37 campsites; restrooms are centrally located. The fireplaces are of the charcoal-burning type, and you should bring your own charcoal. Gathering firewood is prohibited. Camping and picnicking are restricted to the campground area.

Housetrailer can be accommodated, but no special facilities, such as electricity, are available.

A 14-day limit on camping is enforced during the summer, the season of heaviest use; this limit may be extended at other times.

The Silver Spur Guest Ranch offers American plan rates (room and meals) and housekeeping cabins. Faraway Ranch also offers housekeeping cabins. Both ranches are on private land.

### A Reminder

As in other areas of the National Park System, hunting is prohibited. Firearms must be cased or broken down to prevent their use.

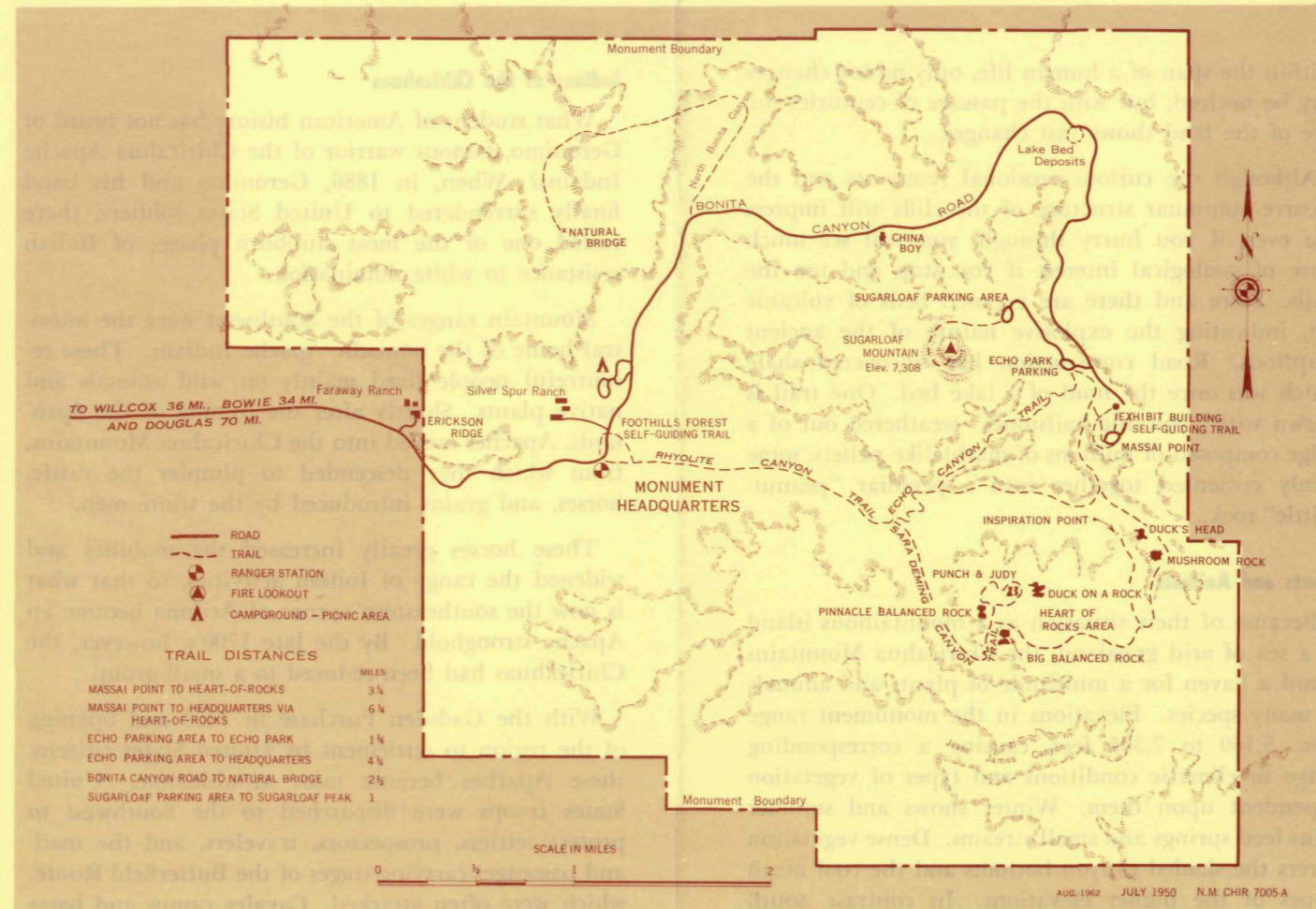
All pets must be on leash or kept in a vehicle.

The disturbance of any animal, plant, or feature is prohibited.

No wheeled vehicles are permitted on the trails.

### Administration

Chiricahua National Monument, established on April 18, 1924, is administered by the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior.



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.

The development of this park is part of MISSION 66, a 10-year conservation program to unfold the full potential of the National Park System for the use and enjoyment of both present and future generations.

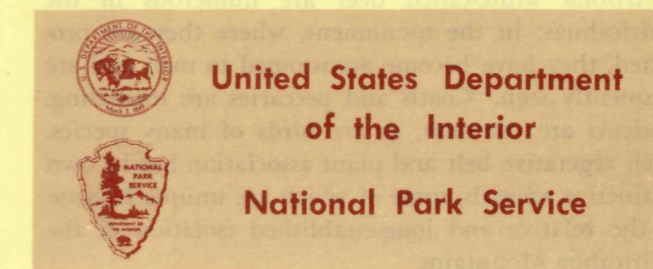
A superintendent, whose address is Dos Cabezas Star Route, Willcox, Ariz. 85643, is in immediate charge of the monument.

### America's Natural Resources

Created in 1849, the Department of the Interior—America's Department of Natural Resources—is concerned with the management, conservation, and development of the Nation's water, wildlife, mineral,

forest, and park and recreational resources. It also has major responsibilities for Indian and territorial affairs.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department works to assure that nonrenewable resources are developed and used wisely, that park and recreational resources are conserved for the future, and that renewable resources make their full contribution to the progress, prosperity, and security of the United States—now and in the future.



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