



Foundation Document Overview

Pecos National Historical Park

New Mexico



Contact Information

For more information about the *Pecos National Historical Park Foundation Document*, contact: peco_superintendent@nps.gov or 505-757-7241 or write to:
Pecos National Historical Park, P. O. Box 418 Pecos, NM 87552-0418

Purpose



The purpose of PECOS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK is to interpret the history of the Pecos area and its “gateway” role between the plains and the Rio Grande Valley and to preserve and protect natural and cultural resources of the Pecos Pueblo, Spanish missions, Santa Fe Trail, Civil War Battle of Glorieta Pass, and Forked Lightning Ranch.



Significance

Significance statements express why Pecos National Historical Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- **Multicultural Crossroads and Commerce** – The upper Pecos River Valley is a multicultural crossroads where trade, commerce, settlement, and conflict shaped the culture of the region. Glorieta Pass, the gateway through the southern Sangre de Cristo Mountains, contains prehistoric, historic, and modern routes, connecting the Rio Grande Valley area with other destinations.
- **Living Landscape, Scenery, and Cultural Continuity** – The area of Pecos Pueblo, in use from past to present, is a place still valued and used for traditional practices by descendants of those who settled here.
- **Kidder’s Landmark Archeology** – Alfred V. Kidder’s innovative use of stratigraphy and nomenclature at Pecos provides the foundation for modern Southwest archeology. The park hosts the annual archeological Pecos Conference every five years and conserves a world-class museum collection of artifacts and documents with cultural and scientific value.
- **Upper Pecos River Watershed** – The Upper Pecos River watershed and its natural resources provide a diverse landscape that has nurtured settlement and facilitated multicultural interactions. These resources were important to people living in the region in the past and continue to be enjoyed by people today.
- **American Civil War Comes to the West** – The park includes Pigeon’s Ranch and Cañoncito, the location of the 1862 Civil War Battle of Glorieta Pass. The outcome of this battle, fought along the Santa Fe Trail, halted Confederate advancement into the West.
- **Forked Lightning Ranch** – This Pueblo Revival style ranch was first owned and developed by Tex Austin, who introduced the concept of dude ranching into the Pecos Valley. Later the ranch was acquired by Col. E. E. “Buddy” Fogelson and Greer Garson. Their generosity and support was instrumental in the establishment of the Pecos National Monument and later designation as Pecos National Historical Park.
- **Colonization, Conflict, and Change** – The expansion of Spanish presence and influence over civil, agrarian, and religious practices is reflected throughout the pueblo landscape. Archeological evidence documents the construction of a Spanish mission complex, including one of the largest churches in 17th-century New Mexico.

Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Pecos Pueblo and Spanish Missions**
- **Cultural Continuity**
- **Archeology, Museum Collections, and Archives**
- **Natural Resources of the Upper Pecos River Watershed**
- **Features Associated with the Civil War Battle of Glorieta Pass**
- **Forked Lightning Ranch**
- **Opportunities for Visitor Understanding**

Pecos National Historical Park contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **E. E. Fogelson Visitor Center and Museum**
- **Hispanic Homesteads**
- **Opportunities for Recreation**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- The Pecos Pueblo story of an ancestral homeland reflects an indigenous people and their encounters with a variety of cultures that resulted in gradual cultural disruption, devastation, and ongoing retention of way-of-life.
- The natural features of the landscape, including the Pecos River and its tributaries, established the scenic backdrop against which people (past and present) adapted their survival strategies.
- The overlay of numerous significant trade routes, from pre-contact through Santa Fe Trail, railroad, pre-1937 historic Route 66, and interstate highway through the Pecos Valley, illuminates the importance of this physical location. The Santa Fe Trail extended the international trade passing through the Pecos Valley, diversifying people, ideas, values, language, ideologies, and material goods.
- As a result of the Battle of Glorieta Pass, Union presence was solidified in the Southwest changing the social, economic, and political dynamics of the region; the future of the people of the New Mexico territory was forever altered.
- The multicultural crossroads of what is now New Mexico has been challenged many times throughout history, bringing diverse communities together in both conflict and peace.
- The Pecos Missions provide the opportunity to consider the effect of Spanish culture on the daily life (including traditional religion, social structure, and technology) of the Pueblo people.
- The Kidder excavations at Pecos Pueblo set a precedent for applying archeological methods that promote scientific study, education, appreciation, and understanding of Southwest archeology.
- The Forked Lightning Ranch provides an opportunity to reflect on the role of ranching in northern New Mexico. This includes the stories of land grants, early Hispanic communities, cowboy/entrepreneur Tex Austin, and its subsequent owners Colonel E. E. “Buddy” Fogelson and actress wife Greer Garson.

Description

Pecos National Historical Park is 28 miles southeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Most of the park lies in the upper Pecos River Valley. This narrow valley is bordered by the 13,000-foot Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the north, the rugged hills of the Tecolote Range to the east, and the steep Glorieta Mesa to the west. The 8,200-foot Glorieta Mesa escarpment is the most prominent geographic feature in the area, rising abruptly above the 7,000-foot valley floor.

The upper Pecos River Basin is part of a broad pass through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. This passageway skirts the south end of the Tecolote Range and extends up the Pecos Valley before traversing the gentle slopes of Glorieta Pass west to the Apache Canyon area and the Rio Grande Valley.

Historically, the Pecos River Valley was a diverse area, with successive populations funneling through the valley. The Paleo-Indians, Archaic peoples, Basketmakers, and Puebloan peoples all left evidence of early use and settlement in the valley. Situated in a strategic location along the trade path between pueblo farmers of the Rio Grande and hunting tribes of the buffalo plains, the Pecos Indians built a fortress-like pueblo during the 15th century, which became the trading center for the region.

Two generations after Coronado's visit in 1542, the Spanish established a mission at Pecos, and the economic contacts continued. By the late 1700s, Hispanic settlers occupied most of the land in the Pecos Valley. Inhabitants saw commerce increase again with the development of a trade route from St. Louis to Santa Fe, which became known as the Santa Fe Trail.

This route to Santa Fe was also used for military expeditions during the Mexican War and the American Civil War. The two areas included in the Glorieta Unit (Pigeon's Ranch and Cañoncito) were the setting for one of the Civil War's most important southwestern battles—the Battle of Glorieta Pass. With the advent of railroads, the gateway provided a natural passage through the basin. Over time, almost all of the trails, roads, railroads, and highways followed the ancient trade and travel routes from the Great Plains to the Rio Grande Valley. Today, the park contains outstanding remnants of the area's history set in a 20th-century ranch backdrop. Over the years, despite the advent of modern towns and ranches, the scene has remained virtually unchanged. In 2013, the park received more than 37,000 visitors.

