

Mesa Verde

NATIONAL PARK • COLORADO

For approximately 1,300 years, beginning about the time of the birth of Christ, Indians lived in this region, farming, fashioning tools and household utensils, and trading with other Indian groups. Their culture evolved over the centuries, until about 700 years ago, when they abandoned their homes and moved to the south and east.

Within the park are preserved pithouses and masonry pueblos on mesa tops, and majestic cliff dwellings—the villages of these people. To learn more about them, the Service with the aid of the National Geographic Society, has conducted a program of scientific investigations on Wetherill Mesa, about 20 miles by road from park headquarters. Many of the ruins have been excavated and stabilized as exhibits-in-place. **Because of road and trail construction, Wetherill Mesa is not yet open to the public; no exceptions can be made.**

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

The park entrance is midway between Cortez and Mancos on U.S. 160. You must drive 21 miles of mountainous road from the entrance to park headquarters, where picnic areas and the Chapin Mesa Museum are located. The campground is 5 miles from the entrance; the Navajo Hill Visitor Center, a restaurant, and a lodge are 16 miles within the park.

There is bus service to the park from Durango and scheduled flights to Durango and Cortez. The nearest railroads are at Grand Junction, Colo., and Gallup, N. Mex. Rent-a-car service is available at airline and rail points.

SEASONS

Mid-May to October 15. Accommodations and other services are available; maximum interpretive services, June 15 through Labor Day.

October 15 to mid-May. Snackbar services and groceries are available, the museum is open, tours are conducted to Spruce Tree House (weather permitting), and you may drive one loop of the ruins road, viewing cliff dwellings from canyon rims and visiting the mesa-top ruins.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging. The Mesa Verde Company manages Far View Lodge at Navajo Hill, where there are deluxe motel units, and cabins in the Plaza area near park headquarters. Lodging is available from mid-May to mid-October. From June 1 through Labor Day, it is advisable to make reservations; write to The Mesa Verde Co., Box 277, Mancos, CO 81328.

Meals are served during the lodge season at Far View Terrace restaurant at Navajo Hill. Snack service is available here and at a small store in the park headquarters area. Carry-out food may be obtained at Morfield Village.

Camping. Morfield Campground, for both tent

and trailer camping, is open from about May 1 to October 15. Reservations cannot be made. The campground contains single and group campsites (which include tables, benches, and charcoal and wood-burning fireplaces) and restrooms. Fuel can be obtained at the Morfield Village store. No utility hookups are provided for trailers, but the campground has a holding-tank disposal station.

Summer camping, permitted only in the campgrounds, is limited to 14 days from June 1 through September 7; the limit may be extended at other times. Campers may not leave campsites unattended for more than 24 hours. Dump refuse from trailers at designated receptacles or in the holding-tank disposal station in the campground.

Fires are permitted only in fireplaces in Morfield Campground and the park headquarters picnic area. Never leave a fire unattended; be sure your fire is out before you leave your camp or picnic site. Report brush, grass, and forest fires to the nearest park ranger, at a ranger station, or at the museum.

Gathering firewood is prohibited. Do not use an ax or knife on any tree or shrub or strip bark from junipers.

Picnicking is permitted only in the picnic area at park headquarters, in the small picnic areas near the comfort stations on each loop of the ruins road, and in the Morfield Campground.

SERVICES

Mail should be sent in care of General Delivery, Mesa Verde National Park, CO 81330, or in care of Far View Lodge if you are a lodge guest.

Telegraph and telephone. Visitors should use Far View Lodge, Mesa Verde National Park, Colo., as their telegraphic address and inquire about messages at the lodge reservation desk or at Far View Terrace. Pay telephones are at Far View Terrace and at the Chapin Mesa Museum parking area. Emergency messages should be sent or called to the chief park ranger's office.

Bus transportation to the ruins is available from The Mesa Verde Company.

Religious services. In summer, nondenominational services are conducted each Sunday morning and evening at the Campfire Circle, park headquarters; and Catholic Mass is said at Morfield Village each Sunday morning.

Service stations are at Morfield Village and Navajo Hill. Towing and emergency road and mechanical service are available through the Mesa Verde Company.

Miscellaneous. Morfield Village store is open during the camping season; there is also a small store in the park headquarters area. Coin-operated ice machines and soft-drink dispensers are available.

Coin-operated showers, washers, dryers, and hair-dryers are at Morfield Village; coin-operated showers and limited laundry service, in the Plaza Area. You can arrange for commercial laundry and drycleaning service at the stores.

Newspapers, magazines, film, and other items may be purchased at Far View Terrace, Spruce Tree Terrace, and Morfield Village. Gift shops at Far View Terrace and Morfield Village feature authentic Indian handicrafts. Interpretive literature is available at the museum and gift shops.

Horseback riding is available from about Memorial Day to Labor Day. Wrangler-guided rides of 1, 2, and 4 hours are offered at Morfield Village. For reservations, write to the MV Pack and Saddle Horse Co., Mesa Verde National Park, CO 81330.

REGULATIONS

These regulations are enforced in order to protect and preserve all prehistoric and natural features and to provide for your safety.

Prehistoric features. Do not disturb, mar, or remove from place any object of antiquity. Do not enter any cliff dwelling except on a guided trip or when a ruin is open for visitation with a park ranger on duty. Severe penalties, including both fine and imprisonment, will be imposed for any violation.

Natural features. Do not disturb rocks, fossils, minerals, or plants, including wildflowers.

Wildlife. Teasing, frightening, capturing, feeding, wounding, or killing any bird or other animal is prohibited.

Firearms must be declared on entering the park and use or display is prohibited.

Fireworks are not allowed.

Smoking. Do not throw cigarettes, cigars, pipe ashes, or matches from your car; be sure they are out before discarding them. In periods of extreme fire danger, smoking is prohibited in moving vehicles and along trails.

Trash must be deposited in receptacles that are provided throughout the park. Please leave the park clean.

Pets must be physically restrained at all times; they are not allowed in public buildings or on park trails.

Rocks or other objects must not be thrown or rolled over the cliffs.

Accidents must be reported at the nearest park ranger station as soon as possible.

Motor vehicles must not be operated outside roadways or parking areas. Park roads have numerous curves and grades, and courtesy and caution must be exercised to prevent accidents.

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THE FEDERAL ANTIQUITIES ACT

The 1906 Federal Antiquities Act prohibits the appropriation, injury, destruction, or removal from place of any object of antiquity, or the excavation, injury, or destruction of any ruin on Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Secretaries of Interior, Agriculture, and the Army, except such scientific research or excavation as these Secretaries may authorize.

ADMINISTRATION

Mesa Verde National Park, established in 1906, contains about 52,000 acres. It is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Mesa Verde National Park, CO, 81330, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future:

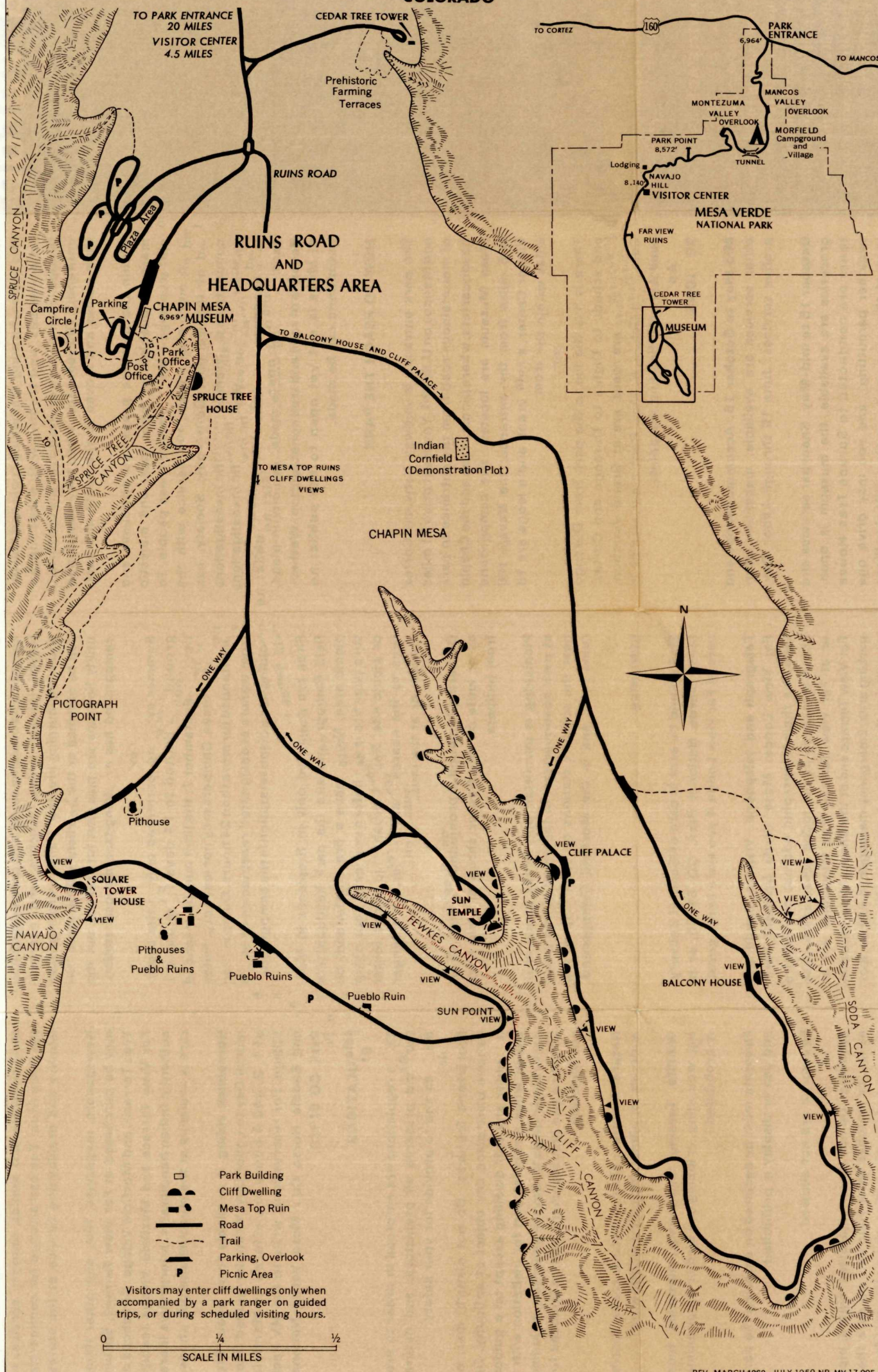
U. S. Department of the Interior

National Park Service



MESA VERDE

NATIONAL PARK
COLORADO



HOW TO SEE THE PARK

To give you a glimpse into the lives of the prehistoric inhabitants, the Service maintains museums, roadside and trailside exhibits, self-guided trips, and (during peak of the summer season) campfire programs.

Entrance road features. There are five numbered stops along the entrance road. To avoid crossing traffic lanes you are urged to visit Stops 1 and 2 on your way into the park; Stops 3, 4, and 5 on your way out.

1. Montezuma Valley Overlook. Outstanding view of the valley and mountains to the north and west.

2. Park Point, halfway between the entrance and headquarters, affords superb views of the entire Four Corners region.

3. Cedar Tree Tower, a ceremonial structure, is one-half mile from the main road, just north of park headquarters.

4. Far View House and Pipe Shrine House are a short distance from the main road, 4 miles north of park headquarters. These two large mesa-top pueblos date between A.D. 1000 and 1200.

5. Mancos Valley Overlook is below Point Lookout, the towering promontory you see on entering the park. From here you can view the valley and mountains to the east and north.

Information and orientation. You are urged to go first to the Navajo Hill Visitor Center in summer or to the Chapin Mesa Museum, where attendants can assist you in planning your visit, and where exhibits show the arts, crafts, and physical remains of the ancient people, as well as the arts and crafts of Indians now living in the Four Corners region. The Chapin Mesa Museum is open from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. in summer; from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. the rest of the year. The Navajo Hill Visitor Center is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from mid-June to Labor Day only.

Ruins road drive. The two self-guiding loops of this road, totaling 12 miles, are open from 8 a.m. to sunset. Many cliff dwellings can be viewed from canyon-rim vantage points, and 10 excavated mesa-top ruins can be visited. Exhibits at the five stops explain the points of interest.

Ranger-guided ruins trips. In summer, park rangers conduct trips through some of the cliff dwellings. In winter (weather permitting), trips are conducted to Spruce Tree House only. Since the trip schedule may be changed, you should check at Navajo Hill or Chapin Mesa Museum information desks.

Campfire programs, conducted each evening from early June to September, deal with prehistoric and modern Indians of the Southwest, and the archeology, history, and natural history of the area.

Hiking. Two short trails are in the headquarters area. Permits must first be obtained from the chief park ranger's office in the museum and returned to the office on completion of a hike. Longer trails in the Morfield Canyon area do not require permits. Hiking is restricted because Mesa Verde's fragile, irreplaceable ruins must have maximum protection.