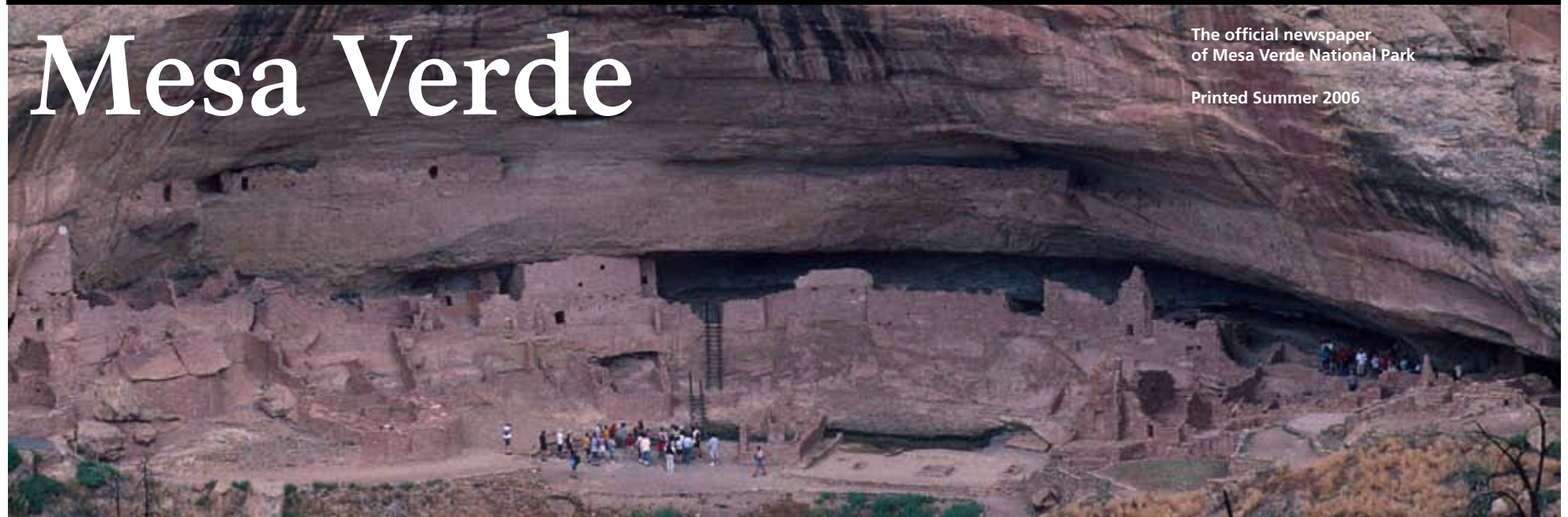




Mesa Verde

The official newspaper
of Mesa Verde National Park

Printed Summer 2006



Making the Most of Your Time

To get the most out of your visit to Mesa Verde, stop first at the Far View Visitor Center (open spring through fall only, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or the Chapin Mesa Museum (open all year). From the park entrance on U.S. Hwy 160, Far View Visitor Center is located 15 miles (25 km) into the park. Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum, Park Headquarters, and Spruce Tree House are 21 miles (34 km) from the park entrance. The route into the park is a steep, narrow, winding mountain road. Depending on weather, traffic, and road construction, plan at least two hours just to drive into and out of the park. The drive is scenic with pull-offs and overlooks that provide spectacular views into four states. The elevations in the park range from 6,900 feet to 8,572 feet. Watch for rocks that may have fallen on to the road.

Use the following tips to plan a late spring, summer, or early fall visit. Although the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum and Spruce Tree House are open all year, many areas including Wetherill Mesa, Far View Visitor Center, and overnight accommodations are closed during the winter months. Be sure to check the park's *Visitor Guide* or www.nps.gov/meve for details on services available during your visit.

Half Day

- Far View Visitor Center (15 miles from park entrance) for information and orientation.
- Chapin Mesa Museum and self-guided tour of Spruce Tree House or drive the Mesa Top Loop Road (6-mile loop road).

One Day

- Far View Visitor Center to purchase tickets to Cliff Palace or Balcony House.
- Cliff Palace Loop Road (If you plan to visit Cliff Palace or Balcony House, make sure you have your tickets first.)
- Chapin Mesa Museum, self-guided tour of Spruce Tree House and drive the Mesa Top Loop Road (6-mile loop road).
- Far View Sites Complex.

One Day Alternative

- Far View Visitor Center to purchase tickets to visit Long House on Wetherill Mesa.
- Wetherill Mesa drive, hiking trails to mesa top sites and cliff dwelling overlooks, and tram service.
- Long House Tour (make sure you have your tickets before driving to Wetherill).
- Self-guided tour of Step House.

Two Days or More (One Day activities plus...)

- Far View Visitor Center to purchase tickets to Cliff Palace, Balcony House and Long House.
- One or more of Mesa Verde's hiking trails.
- Ranger conducted evening program at the Morefield Campground Amphitheater.

The First Cultural National Park

Mesa Verde National Park is the premier archeological park in the United States and a World Cultural Heritage Site. The cultural and natural resources in the Mesa Verde region are significant both nationally and internationally.

Mesa Verde, Spanish for "green table," rises high above the surrounding countryside. Mesa Verde National Park was established in 1906 to preserve sites built by Ancestral Puebloans, an ancient Native American culture that lived on the mesa tops and in the canyon alcoves. Today 24 Native American nations regard Mesa Verde as the home of their ancestors.

Mesa Verde was the first national park set aside "to preserve the works of man." The park is 52,073 acres, 8,100 of which has been

designated as wilderness. The continued preservation of these sites will allow future generations a glimpse into an ancient past and into the lives of a people that inhabited the mesa for eight centuries.

Ancestral Puebloans occupied the Colorado Plateau region for 1,300 years and moved into Mesa Verde by 550 A.D. From the many sites located here, and in the surrounding Four Corners area, archeologists have compiled one of the most significant chapters in the story of prehistoric America.

There are over 4,800 known archeological sites in the park dating from approximately 550 A.D. to 1300 A.D. About 600 of these sites are cliff dwellings built from the late 1100s to 1300. Unoccupied for many centuries, the sites have been weakened by

natural forces. Some were badly damaged by looters before the area became a national park. Preserving these dwellings for future generations is the park's mission. To this end, visitors may enter cliff dwellings *ONLY* when accompanied by a uniformed park ranger. Depending on the season, at least one, and up to five cliff dwellings are open for visitation. Many others can be seen from overlooks.

Although the cliff dwellings are certainly the most spectacular, the mesa top pithouses and pueblos are equally important. There are over 20 mesa top sites and overlooks which may be visited on your own. Seen in chronological order, from pithouses to cliff dwellings, the sites reveal the architectural and cultural development of the Ancestral Puebloans of Mesa Verde.

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Mesa Verde Trip Planner

General Information

ENTRANCE FEES

\$10.00 per private vehicle or \$5.00 per person (walking, bicycle, motorcycle, etc.). The entrance permit is valid for seven consecutive days from date of purchase. Annual Mesa Verde National Park permits are \$20.00 for unlimited entry for one year from date of purchase. A National Park Pass is \$50.00, and good for unlimited entry for one year to all national park sites that charge entrance fees. A Golden Eagle Passport is \$65.00, and good for unlimited entry for one year to all U. S. Government facilities that charge entrance fees. Golden Age Passports, for those 62 and older and U. S. Citizens, cost a one-time fee of \$10.00 and are good for life. Golden Access Passports for disabled U.S. Citizens are free and good for life. *Passports are available only at the park entrance.* Commercial vehicle fees are based on the total capacity of the vehicle: Capacity of 1-6 people, \$25.00 +\$5.00 per person; Capacity of 7-15 people, \$75.00; Capacity of 16-25 people, \$100.00; Capacity of 26+ people, \$200.00.

CAMPING

Morefield Campground, located four miles south of the park entrance, is open from late April through mid-October. Sites are available for tents or trailers (\$19/night), and motor homes with full hookups (\$25/night). Sites have convenient access to restrooms, hot showers, food and supplies, coin-operated laundry, gasoline, and an RV dumping station. RV utility hookups are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Single and group sites include a barbecue grill, picnic table and benches. Charcoal and firewood are available at the camp store. (*Gathering firewood is not permitted.*) Camping is limited to 14 days. Shower facilities are complimentary for registered Morefield campers.

GROUP CAMPING

Morefield Campground has 17 group sites, each accommodating up to 25 people. Reservations can be made through ARAMARK Mesa Verde, PO Box 277, Mancos, CO 81328, (970)533-7731 or (800)449-2288.

PICNIC FACILITIES

Picnic areas are located in the museum area, along both Mesa Top Loop Roads, in Morefield Campground, and at Wetherill Mesa.

BACKPACKING AND HIKING

There is no overnight backpacking or cross-country hiking in the park. Hiking is allowed only in developed areas on the park's six trails, described in the park's *Visitor Guide*. Hikers must register for the Petroglyph Point and Spruce Canyon trails. All trails are closed by snow in the winter, but some opportunities exist for snowshoeing or cross-country skiing.

PETS

Pets must be on a leash at all times, and are allowed only in parking lots. Pets are not allowed on trails, in sites, or in buildings. There are no kennels in the park, but boarding facilities are available in the local communities. *Do not leave your pet inside a closed and locked vehicle, the heat build-up can kill them.*

WEATHER

Mesa Verde National Park generally has mild weather during the summer months, and during some winters. Snow storms may occur as late as May, and as early as October, but usually both of these months are pleasant. Summer days (June through September) are generally warm to hot, with cool evenings. Afternoon thundershowers are common during July and August.

Accessibility

Mesa Verde National Park has accessibility limitations for people with vision, hearing or mobility impairments. Visitors encounter rugged terrain at an elevation of 7,000 to 8,500 feet. Steep cliffs, deep canyons and narrow trails can be a danger to all visitors. Persons with heart or respiratory ailments may have breathing problems at this altitude. *Wheelchairs with wide rim wheels are recommended on trails.*

Scenic Overlooks

- Visually Impaired: With assistance.
- Hearing Impaired: Without difficulty.
- Mobility Limitations: With assistance, but may not meet legal grade requirements.

Morefield Campground/Picnic Areas

- Visually Impaired: With assistance.
 - Hearing Impaired: Without difficulty.
 - Mobility Limitations: With assistance.
- Special Features:* Parking, restrooms, campsites, telephone, paved walks and gravel trails.

Far View Visitor Center

- Visually Impaired: With assistance.
 - Hearing Impaired: Without difficulty.
 - Mobility Limitations: Without difficulty, but does not meet legal requirements.
- Special Features:* Designated parking, ramps, restrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains. Wheelchair available for loan.

Far View Complex

- Visually Impaired: With assistance.
- Hearing Impaired: Without difficulty.
- Mobility Limitations: With assistance.

Museum & Park Headquarters

- Visually Impaired: With assistance.
 - Hearing Impaired: Without difficulty.
 - Mobility Limitations: With assistance. One to three steps in museum; portable ramp available. Rangers and staff will assist.
- Special Features:* Designated parking, restrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains. Wheelchair available for loan.

Spruce Tree House

- Visually Impaired: With assistance.
- Hearing Impaired: Without difficulty.
- Mobility Limitations: With assistance, but does not meet legal grade requirements. Overlook available.

Mesa Top Loop Road

- Visually Impaired: With assistance.
 - Hearing Impaired: Without difficulty.
 - Mobility Limitations: Without difficulty.
- Special Features:* Designated parking, restrooms, drinking fountains, and paved trails.

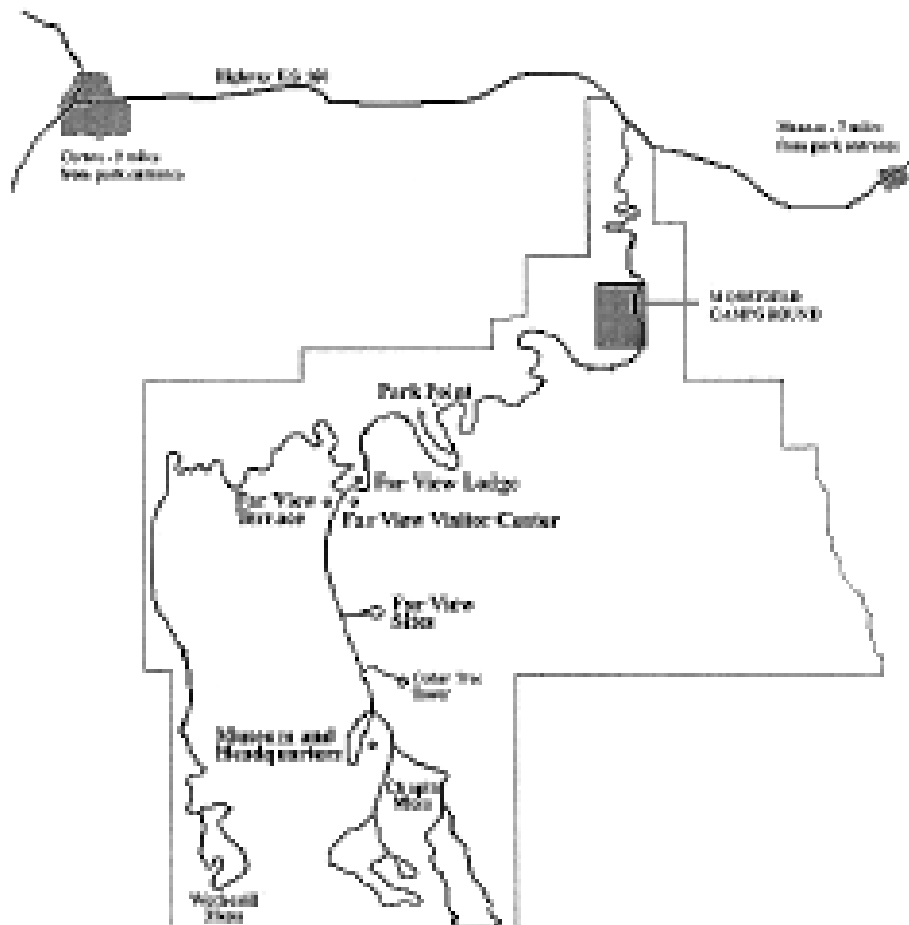
Cliff Palace, Balcony House & Long House

- Visually Impaired: Not recommended.
- Hearing Impaired: With assistance.
- Mobility Limitations: Not accessible.

Step House & Badger House

- Visually Impaired: With assistance.
- Hearing Impaired: Without difficulty.
- Mobility Limitations: With assistance.

Mesa Verde National Park





Mesa Verde Trip Planner

Services

Concessioner Services in Mesa Verde (ARAMARK)

Lodging

Far View Lodge is located 15 miles from the park entrance and has hotel rooms from late April to late October. For reservations contact ARAMARK Mesa Verde, PO Box 277, Mancos, CO 81328, (800) 449-2288.

Camping

Morefield Campground (April-October) is located on the park road four miles from the park entrance. This campground, with 435 sites rarely fills. No reservations are accepted. See the camping section on page 2 for more information.

Gasoline

Gasoline is available only at the Morefield service station located in Morefield Village, open April-October.

Food Service and Gifts

Spruce Tree Terrace, located near the museum, is open year-round offering a gift shop and food service. Far View Lodge and Terrace, located 15 miles from the park entrance, are open mid-April to mid-October and provide a gift shop and food service. Morefield Campground has a gift shop and food service.

Showers and Laundry

Morefield Village, located 4 miles from the park entrance, offers coin operated showers and laundry, and is open from April through October.

More Information

For more information on the services offered by ARAMARK, visit their website at www.visitmesaverde.com.



Mesa Verde Museum Association, Inc.

Mesa Verde Museum Association, Inc. is a non-profit national park cooperating association. The revenues generated by sales in its on-site and online bookstores are used to further Mesa Verde National Park's mission of interpretation, research and education. For more information on the Mesa Verde Museum Association and how you can help support Mesa Verde National Park, visit their website at www.mesaverde.org.

A collection of publications and maps has been created to help plan for and enhance your visit to Mesa Verde National Park. To order a Trip Planner Package or other books and videos on Mesa Verde National Park, the Colorado Plateau and Native American people, visit their online bookstore at www.mesaverde.org, or call (800) 305-6053 or (970) 529-4445.

Local Lodging Information

In addition to lodging in the park, there are many hotels, motels and campgrounds located in Mancos, Cortez and Durango. For information on lodging in the local area please contact one of the following:

- Colorado Lodging: 1-800-777-6880
- Cortez Welcome Center: 1-970-565-4048
- Dolores Visitor Center: 1-970-882-4018
- Durango Chamber of Commerce: 1-800-463-8726
- Mancos Visitor Center: 1-970-533-7434

Mesa Verde Highlights



SPRUCE TREE HOUSE

The Best-Preserved Cliff Dwelling
A 100ft (30m) descent and ascent on a winding path. Total walking distance is 1/2-mile (1km) round trip. Trail begins at the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. Rangers are on-site to answer questions. *Allow 45 minutes to one hour.*



CLIFF PALACE TOUR

Mesa Verde's Largest Cliff Dwelling
This one-hour tour involves climbing five, 8-10ft (2.6-3m) ladders, on a 100ft (30m) vertical climb. Total walking distance is about 1/4-mile (400m), round-trip. The tour begins at Cliff Palace Overlook, an 8-mile (13km), 20-minute drive from the Visitor Center.



MESA TOP LOOP ROAD

Auto Tour - 700 Years of Mesa Verde History
A 6-mile (10km) driving tour with short, paved trails. Twelve easily-accessible sites, including surface dwellings and cliff dwelling overlooks. Highlights include Sun Point Overlook, Square Tower House, and views of Cliff Palace from Sun Point and Sun Temple stops. Open 8 a.m. to sunset. *Allow 45 minutes to 1 hour.*



Mesa Verde Trip Planner



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mesa Verde National Park

Superintendent

Larry T. Wiese

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E-mail

meve_general_information@nps.gov

Know the Rules of the Park

BICYCLE USE

- Due to the steep nature of the park road, lack of shoulders and poor condition of the pavement, *organized bicycle groups are prohibited.*
- Bicycle riders must comply with all traffic regulations, ride in single file, and as far to the right side of the road as possible.
- Bicycles may be ridden only on established public roads (except Wetherill Mesa road) and parking areas. Bicycles are not allowed on trails.
- Each bicycle must exhibit a white light on the front visible from 500 feet and a red light or reflector on the rear visible for 300 feet during periods of low visibility and in the tunnel.
- Bicycle riders may not be attached to or towed by a motor vehicle.
- No bicycle shall be used to carry more people at one time than it was designed and equipped to handle.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- Trailers and towed vehicles are not permitted beyond Morefield Campground.
- Wetherill Mesa Road has sharp curves and steep grades on the twelve mile stretch from the Visitor Center to Wetherill Mesa. *Vehicles on this road are restricted to less than 8,000 pounds and 25-feet in length.*

HIKING RESTRICTIONS

Regulations at Mesa Verde National Park permit hiking only around developed areas and on designated trails. Visitors found hiking away from these areas, *or entering cliff dwellings when not accompanied by a uniformed National Park Service ranger*, are subject to penalties provided for in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These regulations are necessary to protect the fragile and irreplaceable archeological sites and artifacts for which Mesa Verde National Park was established.

Hikers are advised to carry water with them on all trails during the summer months. Please stay away from cliff edges as undercut overhangs are dangerous. Trails can be muddy and slippery after summer rains and winter snow. Proper footwear is recommended. Visitors with health problems should be warned that all trails, except the Soda Canyon trail, are strenuous with steep elevation changes. Pets are not allowed on park trails. For information on the designated hiking trails in the park, see the park's *Visitor Guide*.

Need More Information?

Want to learn more about Mesa Verde National Park? Visit Mesa Verde's official website at www.nps.gov/meve.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mesa Verde National Park
P.O. Box 8
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



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