

Field house

New to this period are small structures often referred to as field houses. These structures typically consist of one or two rooms and are found proximal to areas suitable for farming. Field houses were used during the growing season and served as shelter for those tending garden plots. Numerous examples of farming strategies are fully developed during the Classic Period. Most consist of constructions that help preserve soil moisture such as using gravel as a mulching agent or terraces to prevent soil erosion.

Beginning in the late 1550s there is a significant decline in population/area occupied within the region and along the margins of pueblo settlement in the northern Rio Grande region. This shrinkage corresponds with another drought period in the mid to late 1500s. Some investigators believe this trend may be the result of introduced diseases brought by Spanish expeditions, beginning with Coronado in 1540. Whatever the cause, intensive Pueblo occupation of the Bandelier area ends between 1550 and 1600. In the following decades, Pueblo use consists of limited farming, hunting and the maintenance of religious sites.

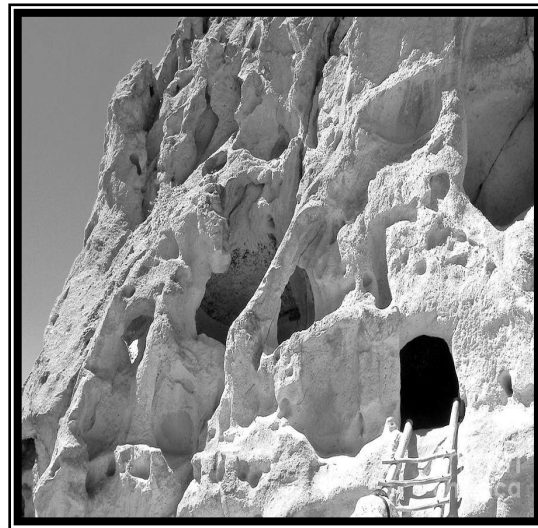


Bandelier National Monument

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A Brief History of Ancestral Pueblo Occupation on the Pajarito Plateau

➤➤➤ Bandelier National Monument
National Park Service



What was life like?

Bandelier National Monument (Bandelier) and the surrounding Pajarito Plateau have been occupied for thousands of years. The most numerous and well-known cultural remains belong to the Ancestral Pueblo Period, but other cultures and occupations are also represented:

Cultural Development in the Bandelier Area		
Culture	Period	Dates
Paleoindian	Clovis, Folsom, Eden, Midland	9500 to 5500 BCE*
Archaic	Early – Jay, Bajada Mid – San Jose, Armijo Late – En Medio, Trujillo	5500 to 3200 BCE 3200 to 800 BCE 800 BCE to 600 CE
Ancestral Pueblo	Developmental Coalition Classic	600 to 1150 CE 1150 to 1325 CE 1325 to 1600 CE
Historic (Native American, Hispanic, Euro-American)	Spanish Colonial Mexican United States	1600 – 1821 CE 1821 – 1846 CE 1846 – present

*BCE—Before Contemporary Era, CE—Contemporary Era

Paleoindian and Archaic Periods

9500 BCE—600 CE

These two periods are lumped together as very few Paleoindian materials have been found in Bandelier or the Pajarito Plateau. Known Paleoindian remains consist of isolated finds including Clovis and later styles of projectile points. Archeologists define this occupation as small groups, moving seasonally, hunting large game animals and foraging for wild plants. Climate at this time is believed to be wetter and cooler than today. The animals hunted for food included several species now extinct including mastodon and large bison. It is during this time that the stone or lithic resources of the park and within the surrounding Jemez Mountains were first utilized for the production of stone tools such as projectile points and knives.



This Clovis point is roughly 12,000 years old and is one of the oldest artifacts found in Bandelier. The point, mounted on a spear, was used for hunting large animals.

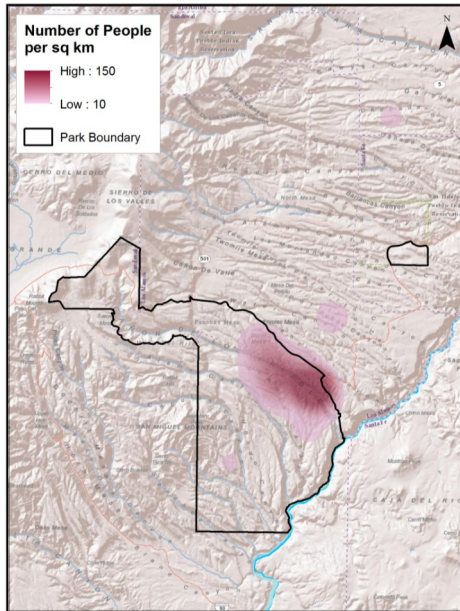
At the end of the Pleistocene, the climate began to warm and precipitation decreased. The large game animals disappeared and the people began to collect more wild plant foods. This change in subsistence strategy is termed the Archaic Period, which began around 5500 BCE. Within the monument and the surrounding Pajarito Plateau, the number of Archaic sites increased during this time, suggesting that population was increasing. Archaic period sites are quite subtle and will typically consist of a scatter of lithic debris, an occasional hearth, fire-cracked rocks and grinding stones, such as a metate or a one-hand mano.

As the population slowly increased, new technologies began to appear including the bow and arrow that replaced the atlatl, pottery making and the introduction of agriculture. These changes occurred gradually and the appearance of these new traditions along with the construction of permanent houses and storage features are the markers for the beginning of the Pueblo Period.

Bandelier's Population Progression

Developmental Period

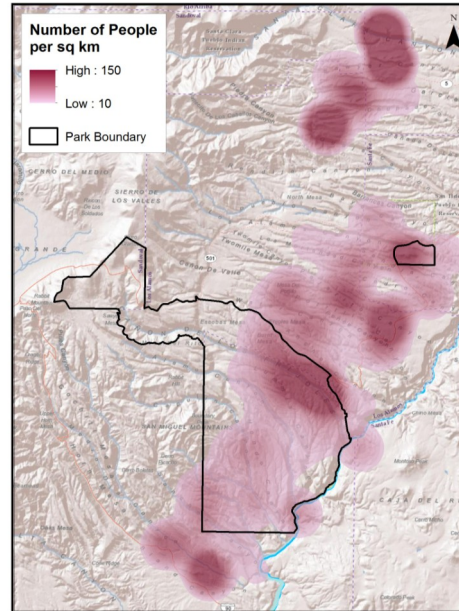
600—1150 CE



Archeologists refer to the earliest pueblo occupation in this area as the **Developmental Period**. Sites dating to this era are rare in Bandelier and the entire northern Rio Grande region. Most investigators believe that these sites are the result of local populations that begin to commit to a more sedentary lifestyle supported by a higher reliance on agriculture. Near the end of this period, ca. 1100 – 1150, there is an increase in the number of villages, suggesting that population is increasing or migrants from the San Juan Basin/Four Corners area are joining existing settlements. Typical villages consist of a block of rooms, typically 6 to 10, a semi-subterranean kiva and midden or refuse area. Construction is usually masonry, although adobe walls are sometimes used.

Coalition Period

1150—1325 CE



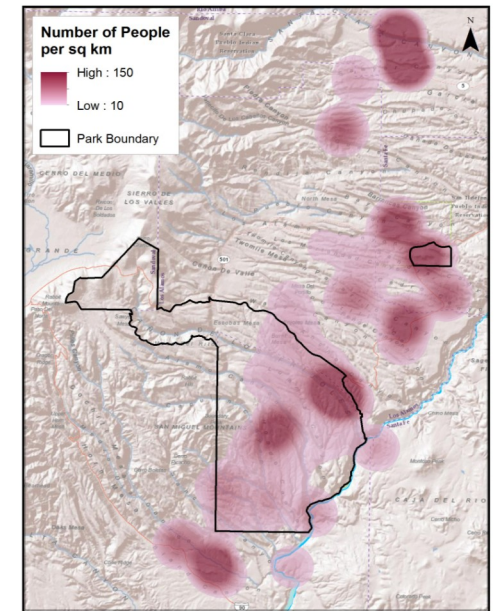
The **Coalition Period** is characterized as a time of marked change and transition for the Pueblo occupants. There is a tremendous increase in the number of settlements which is attributed to one or more migrations of people from the San Juan Basin/Four Corners area. An extreme drought that occurred in the 1200s is believed to have been the major reason for the influx of people. For the park, this is the beginning of substantial Pueblo occupation.

Coalition Period villages are generally constructed of tuff-block masonry containing 10 to 30 rooms with one or two kivas. New pottery styles appear which resemble those found in the Four Corners region and are another indication of where the new settlers came from. Subsistence is

primarily based on agriculture and evidence of development such as the construction of terraced farming plots, bordered gardens and gravel mulched gardens appear. Many new settlements are found which indicate that as population continues to increase, new farming areas are needed.

Classic Period

1325—1550 CE



Beginning in the early 1300s, pueblo settlement begins to coalesce into fewer but larger villages. This shift in settlement size marks the beginning of the **Classic Period**. Within Bandelier Classic Period settlement is concentrated at Frijoles Canyon, Yapashi Mesa, Capulin Canyon and Mesa and San Miguel Mesa. Throughout the northern Rio Grande region, the small scattered villages of the Coalition Period are abandoned and settlement is now located in immense villages — some containing up to 2,000 rooms arranged around spacious plazas. Although village sites are increasing in size, it is believed that population is beginning a slow decline.

Four Corners Climate Reconstruction for Drought from 1270 - 1280 CE

