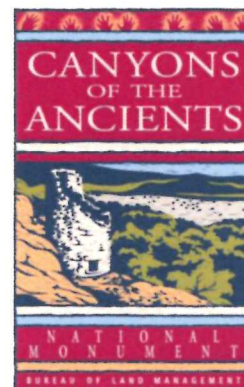


Anasazi Heritage Center and Canyons of the Ancients National Monument



The Anasazi Heritage Center (AHC) is a Bureau of Land Management museum that interprets the history and culture of the Four Corners region, including Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the Trail of the Ancients.

The AHC includes a research facility with over 3 million artifacts, samples, and original documents. Most of these materials represent the Northern San Juan branch of the Ancestral Pueblo culture, and were recovered by the Dolores Archaeological Project during construction of McPhee Dam and Reservoir. As a designated federal repository, the AHC continues to receive materials from other professional excavations on public land in the region.

The word *Anasazi* is a Navajo name for the agricultural people, also known as *Ancestral Puebloans*, who lived in this area between about AD 1-1300. The population size varied over time, but at its peak many thousands of families occupied this corner of Colorado. Their descendants belong to a group of modern tribes known as Pueblo Indians. *Pueblo* refers to the apartment-house village style which their ancestors developed and which many Pueblos still inhabit today.

This pueblo-style museum opened to the public in 1988. Its facilities include a main exhibit hall, theater, gallery for temporary exhibits, library, conference room, and museum shop.

On the museum grounds are two 12th century archaeological sites, the Dominguez and

Escalante Pueblos, named after Spanish friars who explored this area in 1776. Escalante's journal was the first record of an ancient pueblo in southwest Colorado.

Dominguez Pueblo, the remains of four rooms and a kiva in front of the museum, represents a typical family unit of its time. Escalante Pueblo, a larger and more elaborate village on the hilltop behind the museum, shows influence from Chaco Canyon about 100 miles southeast. Escalante is reached from a ½-mile wheelchair-accessible trail offering 360° views of the La Plata Mountains, the Montezuma Valley, McPhee Reservoir, and Mesa Verde.

The Anasazi Heritage Center's goal is to promote public awareness of archaeology and cultural resources, the Ancestral Pueblo culture, and multiple-use management of public lands. Exhibits include artifacts, illustrations, a replica pithouse, and interactive computer stations. Other "hands-on" exhibits demonstrate traditional weaving and corn grinding, microscopic analysis, and tree-ring dating.



Escalante Pueblo

In June 2000 the AHC became the visitor information center for **Canyons of the Ancients National Monument**, a 166,000 acre archaeological preserve west of Cortez and Dolores.

Maps and brochures about CANM are available at the museum front desk. Four destinations are minimally developed for visitors: Lowry Pueblo, Painted Hand Pueblo, Sand Canyon Pueblo, and the Sand Canyon Trail.

Most roads in the Monument are dirt and gravel; please ask for maps and current information as conditions change seasonally.

Special programs and exhibits feature local history, Native American cultures, and regional art and craft. They are made possible by visitor donations and entry fees under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

The nonprofit *Canyonlands Natural History Association* operates our museum shop. Their earnings support new exhibits, publications, and educational programming at the AHC.

While at the museum, be sure to pick up current information on future exhibits and events.

Archaeological sites contain complex human stories which disappear when modern people disturb those sites. Therefore, national and state laws protect ancient and historic structures and artifacts as *cultural resources*. Excavating or collecting artifacts on federal land is prohibited except by permit from the Department of the Interior. Native Americans regard many such ancestral places as sacred. They have a strong concern for their preservation, and have rights to use sites for religious purposes.

Bureau of Land Management
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