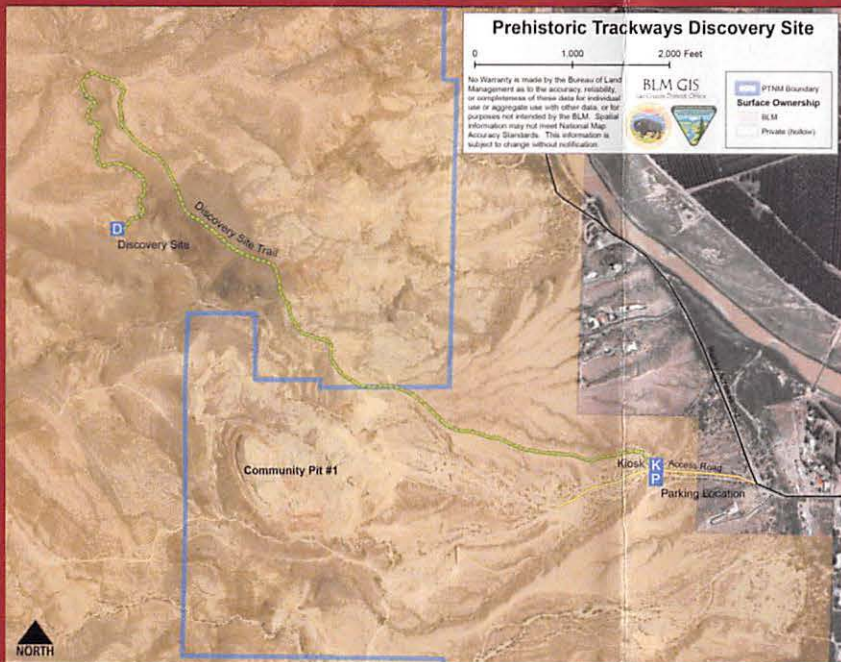


DIRECTIONS TO THE MONUMENT

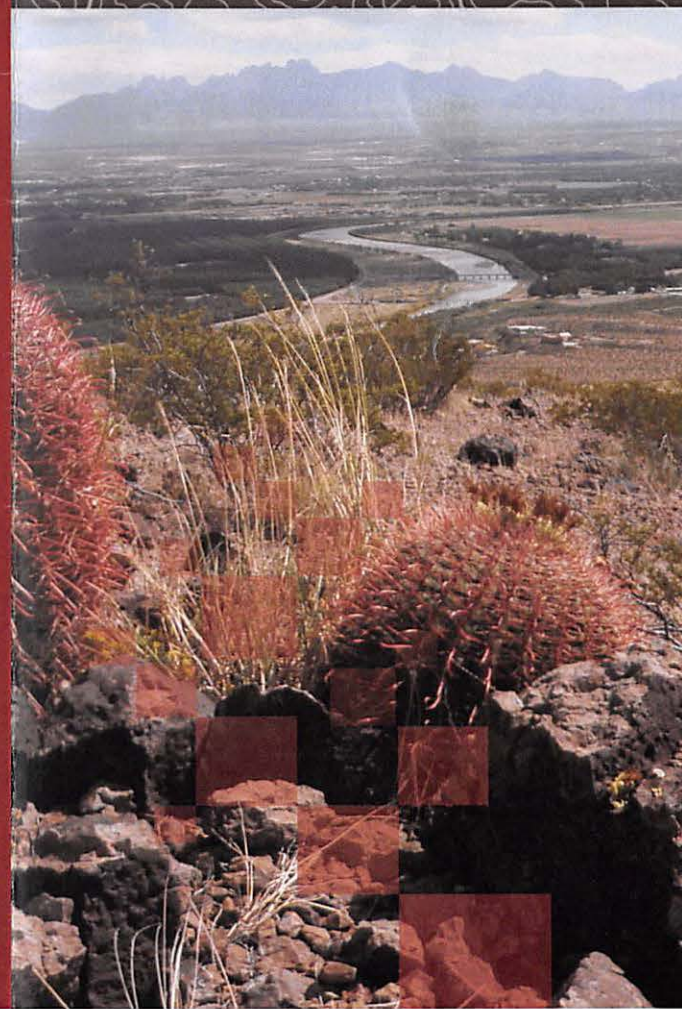
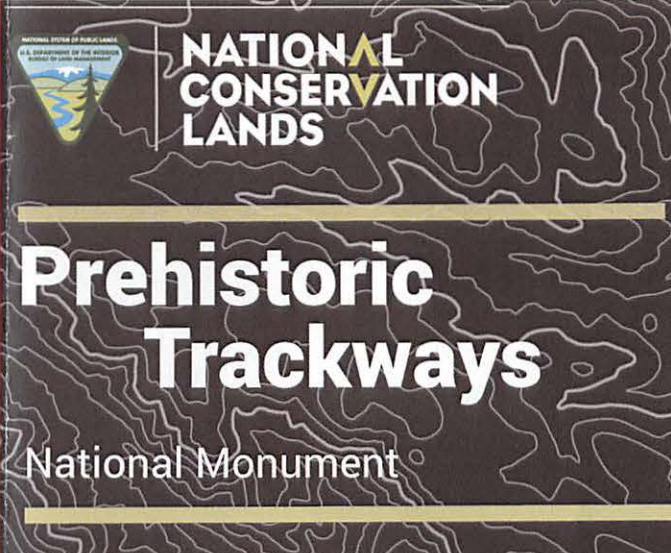
Coming from the North (I-25): At the Doña Ana Exit: From NM320 (Thorpe Road) in Doña Ana, go west to US 85, then go north about a half a mile to Shalem Colony Road. Turn west on Shalem Colony Trail, which curves to the south. Go about 1.5 miles until you cross over the Rio Grande then take a right onto county road, Rocky Acres Trail. Travel approximately ¼ mile to Permian Tracks Road and take a left on to this dirt road. Cross over a cattle guard and continue to the west. This road, past about a mile, is for high-clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles only.

Coming from the South (Las Cruces): Travel on Picacho Ave./ Hwy. 70, at the stop light with Shalem Colony Trail, go north on Shalem Colony Trail for approximately 5.5 miles. Prior to reaching the Rio Grande, you will reach a county road, Rocky Acres Trail. Turn west on Rocky Acres Trail. Travel approximately ¼ mile to Permian Tracks Road and take a left on to this dirt road. Cross over a cattle guard and continue to the west. This road, past about a mile, is for high-clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles only.



TRACK YOUR WAY out to the *Discovery Site*, where 2,500 slabs of trackways were excavated by Jerry MacDonald and now make up the Jerry MacDonald Paleozoic Trackways collection at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. Several different types of animal tracks and conifer leaf imprints are still visible. There is no maintained trail leading out to it, but here is a map with the ridgeline way highlighted.

Bureau of Land Management
 Las Cruces District Office
 1800 Marquess Street
 Las Cruces, NM 88005
 575-525-4300



Prehistoric Trackways National Monument

Track your way to 280 million years ago... a time when Las Cruces, New Mexico was located near the equator. It was a tropical environment, a coastal area located next to an inland sea. The vegetation was thick with trees that had broad, bamboo-like trunks and conifer-like leaves. Fern-like plants grew densely from the ground. Large amphibians and reptiles were on the top of the food chain. Smaller amphibians and reptiles fought for survival. Various insects made their homes amongst the swampy landscape. This was a time tens of millions of years before the dinosaurs and hundreds of millions of years before humans.

At Prehistoric Trackways National Monument this world has been caught in red mudstone from tracks to mud cracks and gas bubbles. Hundreds of fossil sites in and around the Monument preserve different parts of this ancient ecosystem.

Marine fossils tell of times when the sea took over parts of the land and then receded leaving shells, corals and microscopic organisms behind in thick slabs of limestone. Multiple layers of petrified wood laid out and buried (some even burnt and turned into petrified charcoal) show a picture of violent weather causing blow downs. Plant fossils display what the botanical environment was like. Miles of sites with tracks from tiny amphibians to large reptiles show where animals roamed, how they walked, and glimpses into their lives. Even insect and invertebrate tracks and burrows display pictures of ancient life.

This incredible fossil record has received worldwide recognition. It has been studied and continues to be studied by scientists, museums and research facilities from all over the world. Because of its importance, on March 30th of 2009, it was established by the U.S. Congress as a National Monument to be protected for perpetuity. Present and future generations will be able to learn, discover and explore this ancient, lost, extinct period in the Earth's history.

The Bureau of Land Management is in the beginning stages of implementing a resource management plan for the Monument. In the meantime, there are no developed hiking and equestrian trails and no interpretive signs. Roads are not maintained and there are no facilities. There are off-highway vehicle and mountain bike trails, however they are rugged and require appropriate skills and equipment.

The Prehistoric Trackways National Monument is public land, people are free to visit, but should be aware of the harsh desert environment. Be prepared with water, sun protection, and appropriate shoes and clothing. Make sure to let people know where you are. The fossil sites are not marked and not easy to find. The most accessible place to see trackways is at "The Discovery Site".

The quarry located off of Permian Track Road is closed to the public. Avoid going in and around it.



Tracks of ancient Permian reptiles and amphibians give insight into the lives of these extinct, prehistoric animals.

THE FOSSILS OF PREHISTORIC TRACKWAYS NATIONAL MONUMENT PRESENT A WINDOW INTO THE PAST AND PAINT A PICTURE OF A 280 MILLION YEAR OLD WORLD.



Fossils of leaves and foliage, along with petrified logs, paint a picture of ancient conifers.



Invertebrate traces, even a scorpion body imprint (shown on the right), give scientists a view into a rarely represented section of the fossil record.



The large quantity of marine fossils illustrate a time when Las Cruces, New Mexico was not an arid desert but sea front property.