

Petroglyph

National Monument
National Park Service
City of Albuquerque



A NEW PARK . . .



Petroglyph National Monument lies on the west side of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The major landscape feature is the West Mesa; the dark, winding line of a 17-mile-long lava escarpment and the five volcanic cones that lie upon the mesa top. This new national monument, established by Congress in 1990, protects the more than 15,000 petroglyphs (images pecked or scratched into rock) that have been found here.

This is a special place, not just for monument visitors but also for many Pueblo Indians, the descendants of those who carved the images into the black rock of the volcanic escarpment. Contemporary Indians consider the entire monument a sacred landscape; in essence an outdoor church, where worship and ceremony still take place, an area that demands respect and care.

. . . IN A SPECIAL PLACE

Most of the petroglyphs were created between A.D. 1300 and 1650; though some could be as much as 2,000 to 3,000 years old while others are historic, dating from the Spanish colonial period. In addition to the petroglyphs, more than 100 archeological sites help tell a 12,000-year-long story of human use along the West Mesa.

There were many reasons for making the petroglyphs, most of which are only poorly understood by non-Indians. We do know that the images are far more than just art or imitation of the natural world. They are powerful cultural symbols that reflect the complex society and religion of the Pueblo peoples. There seems to be an endless variety of images — animal figures, geometric shapes, masks, spirals, stars — but the one unifying principle is the

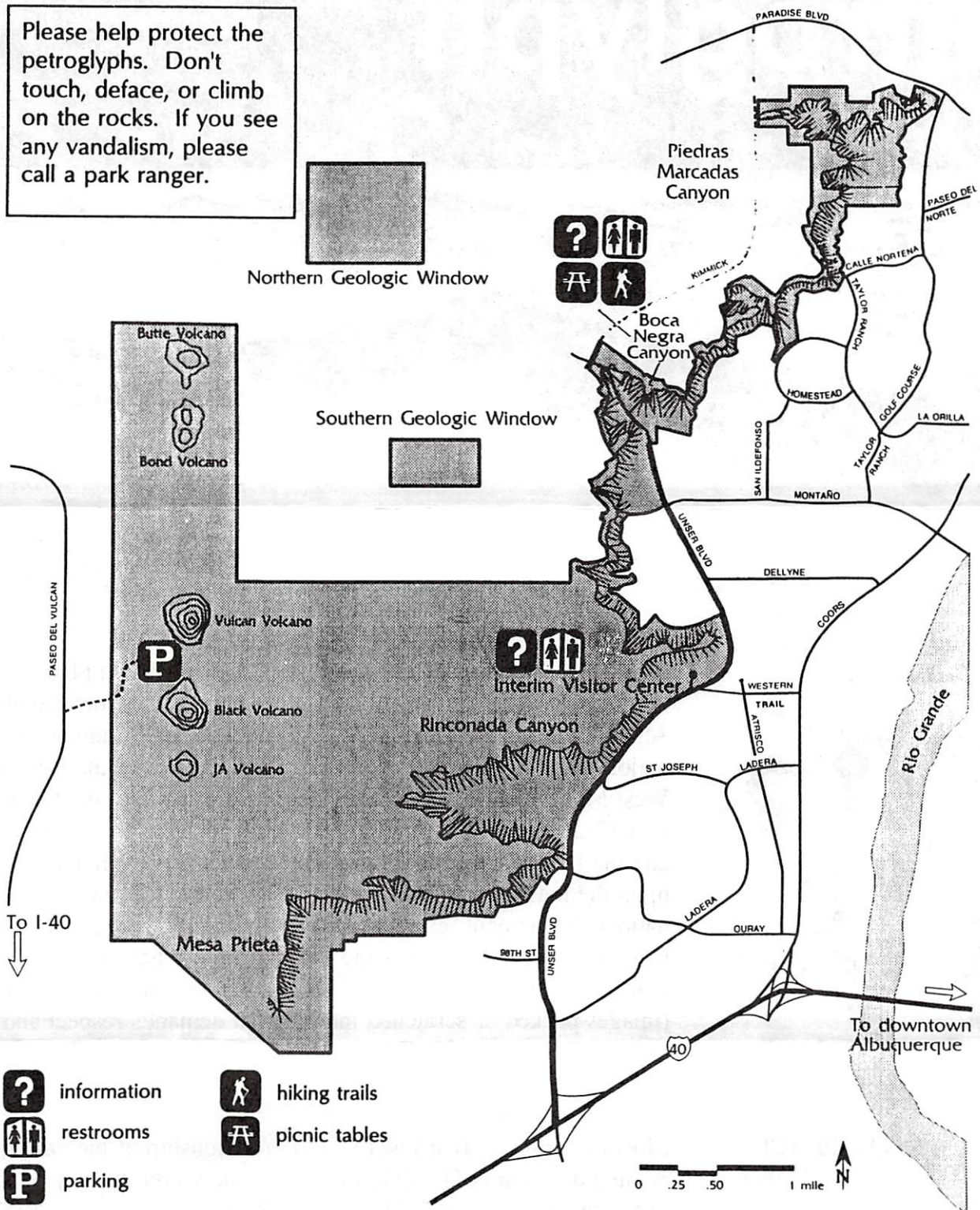
relationship of the various images to the sacred history of the Pueblos.

Techniques for dating specific petroglyphs are being developed, but there is still much to be done before an easy, reliable method emerges. Often our best clues to the relative date of a petroglyph is by comparing the image itself with other artwork of a known date, pottery or kiva murals for example.

We hope that you will enjoy your visit to Petroglyph National Monument and ask for your assistance in preserving this rich cultural landscape. Please do not touch the images, make tracings, or otherwise disturb the rock surfaces. Petroglyphs are fragile, non-renewable cultural resources that, once damaged, can never be replaced.



Please help protect the petroglyphs. Don't touch, deface, or climb on the rocks. If you see any vandalism, please call a park ranger.



EXPLORING THE PETROGLYPHS

Information about conducted programs and points of public access can be obtained at the visitor center, located at 4735 Unser Blvd., NW. This facility is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the winter (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day), and from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the summer.

summer. Three self-guided trails, restrooms and picnic tables are available.

Not all of Petroglyph National Monument is currently in public ownership. As land is acquired, rangers will open more areas to the public. Call the National Park Service for more information on ranger-led activities.

The Boca Negra Unit (formerly Indian Petroglyph State Park), is located just north of Montano Road at 6900 Unser Boulevard NW. It is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the winter and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the

The national monument is jointly administered and managed by the National Park Service and the Open Space Division of the City of Albuquerque.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Petroglyph National Monument
National Park Service
4735 Unser Blvd., NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87120
(505) 839-4429

City of Albuquerque
Open Space Division
P.O. Box 1293
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103
(505) 873-6620

