

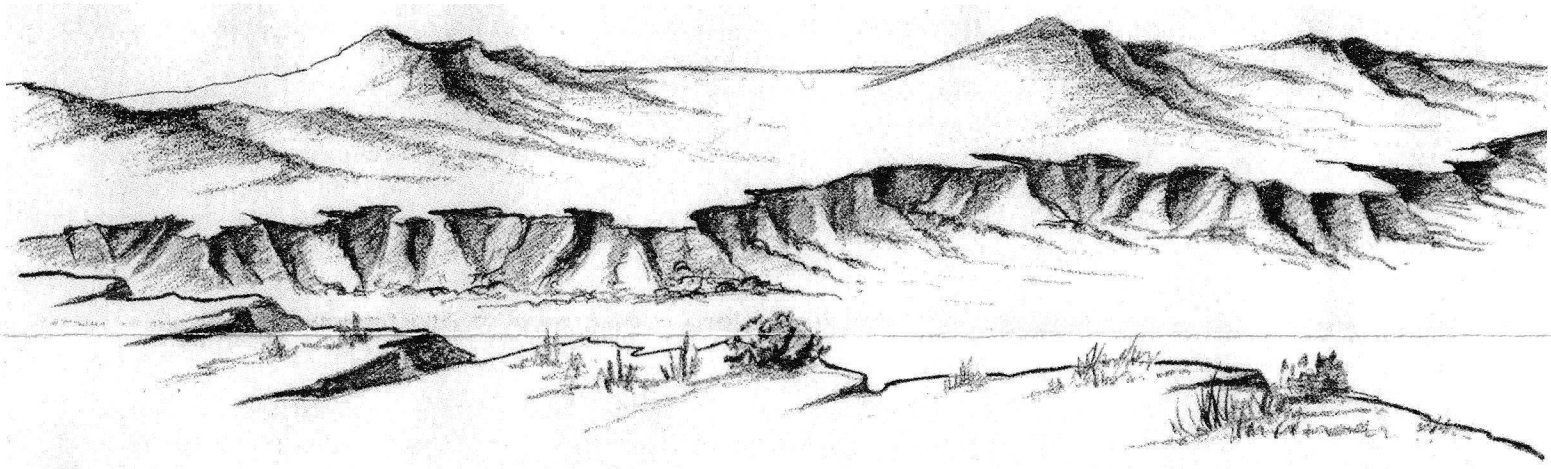
Petroglyph

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Petroglyph National Monument
City of Albuquerque



Rinconada Canyon



Explore a Narrow Valley

Rinconada Canyon offers insight into the geologic, cultural, and natural resources of Petroglyph National Monument. Enter a narrow valley that seems to have frozen in time, carrying you over sand dunes and alongside a volcanic escarpment abundant with plant and animal desert life. Follow the path of ancestral Puebloans into a landscape of basalt boulders yearning to speak to those who are willing to listen. In Rinconada Canyon the sounds and sights of the city fade away and may be replaced with the coo of a mourning dove or a collared lizard sunning itself on a basalt boulder.

The Geologic Story

As you hike the sand dunes in Rinconada Canyon you are walking on the Santa Fe Formation which is believed to be up to 25,000 feet thick in some areas. This formation is comprised of alluvial sediments (sand and gravel) that eroded from nearby moun-

from a 5-mile long fissure, or crack, in the earth's surface three miles west of Rinconada Canyon. As the sand eroded from underneath the basalt caprock, boulders tumbled down forming the escarpment on which the petroglyphs are found. As you

tain ranges and were washed down into the valley by ancient streams.

Geologists estimate the Albuquerque volcanoes last erupted 150,000 years ago. Basaltic lava seeped

hike this canyon you may see the results of this past geologic activity. The escarpment is moving very slowly westward as the erosion process continues. However, the current dry conditions of the southwest have kept the erosion process to a minimum.

Human Connections

Around A.D. 1300 there was a population increase in the Middle Rio Grande Valley by ancestors of today's Pueblo Indians and other Southwestern tribes. The Ancestral Puebloans lived in adobe villages along the Rio Grande, utilizing Albuquerque's West Mesa for hunting, gathering, dry-farming, cultural and religious activities.

Spanish explorers and Mexican natives arrived in the Southwest in 1540, meeting groups of people along the Rio Grande who lived in what they de-

scribed as *pueblos*, or towns, hence the name Pueblo people. Rinconada Canyon exhibits remnants of Spanish activity including rock shelters, rock wall alignments (possible sheep corrals), and petroglyphs of Christian crosses, sheep, horses, cattle, and their livestock brands. These sheepherders were likely descendants of the Atrisco Land Grant holders who were granted an 82,000 acre parcel in 1692 by Governor Don Diego de Vargas. Local Native peoples have a long and enduring relationship with the land and its resources.

The Petroglyphs

Most of the petroglyphs were made by pecking. An early method of pecking may have been accomplished by striking the basalt boulder directly with a hammerstone removing the dark, desert varnish on the boulders surface. Later, a more controlled execution was developed by using two stones, in much the way a chisel is used, to peck boulders. This "hammer and chisel" method gave petroglyph makers the ability to peck images with detail.

Archeologists believe Ancestral Puebloans made most of the 1200 petroglyphs in Rinconada Canyon four to seven hundred years ago. Pueblo elders believe the images are as old as time. They also believe that the petroglyphs choose when and to whom they reveal themselves. You may not see them all. The images include anthropomorphs—human-like figures, concentric circles/spirals, animal figures, and geometric designs. Pueblo

Indians use petroglyphs to teach their children about their history, culture, and spiritual beliefs.

Petroglyphs offer the opportunity to think about how human inhabitants interacted with nature and with each other. Many Southwest Indians are able to claim cultural relationships to past inhabitants of this area because they recognize the images as having deep cultural and spiritual significance.

As you view the images, consider how they fit into the landscape and how the images might be important in Southwest Indian, Spanish, and Mexican cultures and religious beliefs. Also recognize that petroglyph images have varied interpretations or meanings to different people. Please respect the importance of petroglyphs to the inhabitants, both past and present, of this sacred land.

The Hike

The trail along the base of the north side of the canyon allows you to view a variety of petroglyphs. The trail is 1.25 miles long to the head of the canyon (2 1/2 miles round trip) and is moderately strenuous. You may return by backtracking along the north side of the canyon or continue the trail loop down the middle of the canyon. This route is devoid of petroglyphs but your chance of seeing an Earless Leopard Lizard or hearing the cascading song of a Canyon Wren is worth the trip.

As you watch a turkey vulture soar above the canyon or a desert millipede walk across the trail, take the time to let your imagination wander and experience the beauty of this compelling landscape.

For your safety and for the protection of petroglyphs:

Bring Water And Apply Sunscreen

Water is not available at Rinconada Canyon.

No Climbing

Climbing on boulders or the escarpment can cause

a rock fall, putting yourself and others in a dangerous situation and possibly damaging petroglyphs and/or archaeological sites.

Stay on Established Trail

Foot traffic alters sites in many ways, including removal of vegetation and, often, displacement of artifacts. Restricting the number of trails helps preserve the natural setting.

Please Do Not Touch Petroglyphs

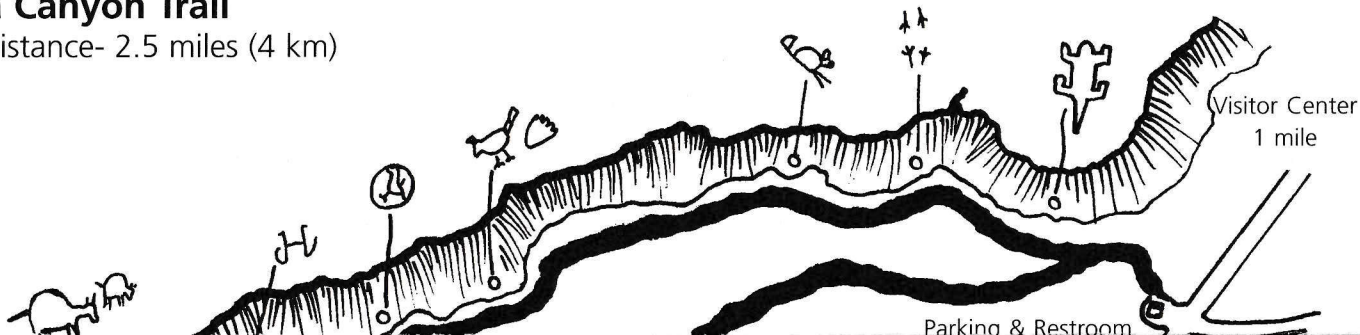
Direct contact with petroglyphs is destructive. Everytime we touch an object, we leave a residue of body oil. An accumulation of body oil causes the images to fade. Applying chalk or other substances can interfere with dating methods and permanently affect the appearance of the images. Attempts to remove graffiti causes further damage.

Leave All Artifacts And Rocks In Place

The relationship of artifacts to the landscape is destroyed when removed or altered. Respect the inhabitants of this land and their culture by leaving Rinconada Canyon as though you were never there.

Rinconada Canyon Trail

Round Trip Distance- 2.5 miles (4 km)





Help Protect the Petroglyphs

Vandalism impacts many petroglyph sites throughout the southwest and Rinconada Canyon is no exception. Aggressive enforcement of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and increased public awareness of the value of petroglyphs are two of our best weapons against the destruction of these irreplaceable resources.

Please report any suspicious activities to a park ranger or call either:
Petroglyph National Monument (505) 899-0205,

Open Space Dispatch (505) 452-5206, Open Space Administrative Office (505) 452-5200, or the Archaeological Resources Protection Act Hotline 1-800-227-7286.

You can help protect these valuable resources by volunteering to monitor this canyon and other sites within Petroglyph National Monument. Please inquire at the Visitor Center for volunteer opportunities or call (505) 899-0205.