

Rinconada

U.S. Department of Interior
National Park Services
Petroglyph National Monument



INTRODUCTION.....

Rinconada Canyon offers visitors an insight into the geologic, cultural and natural resources of this region. From the parking lot a sandy path follows the northern escarpment, carrying you over sand dunes and alongside desert life. As you walk into the canyon the sounds and sights of the city fade

away and may be replaced with the coo of a mourning dove or a colored lizard sunning itself on a basalt boulder. Here you see prehistoric and historic petroglyphs, rock wall alignments and shelters, and wildlife living in the vegetation growing throughout the canyon.

GEOLOGIC HISTORY

The volcanoes erupted approximately 110,000 years ago in the Rio Grande Valley. Basaltic lava

the erosion process continues. However, the current dry conditions of the southwest have kept the



flowed from a 5-mile long fissure in the Earth's surface three miles west of the mouth of Rinconada Canyon. As the sand eroded from underneath the basaltic cap, the rock tumbled down forming the escarpment on which the petroglyphs are found. As you hike through Rinconada Canyon you may see the results of this past geologic activity. The escarpment is moving very slowly westward as

erosion process to a minimum.

As you hike up and down the sandy hills in Rinconada Canyon you are walking on the Santa Fe Formation which is believed to be 20,000 to 25,000 feet thick. This formation is comprised of alluvial sediments (sand and gravel) that eroded from nearby mountain ranges and was washed down into the valley.

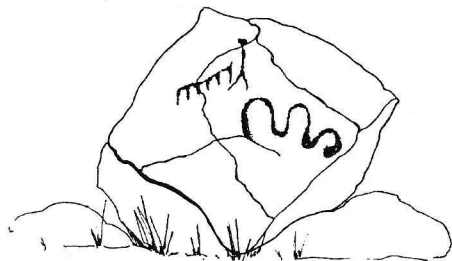
HUMAN CONNECTIONS



There was a great increase in population in the Middle Rio Grande Valley around 1300 A.D. by ancestors of today's Pueblo Indians. They may have moved here because of depleted resources elsewhere, utilizing Albuquerque's West Mesa for hunting, gathering, dry-farming, cultural and religious activities. The arrival of Spanish explorers in the southwest brought many changes to the native peoples. One of the changes was the introduction of livestock, including the Churro sheep.

Rinconada Canyon exhibits many remnants of sheepherding activity including; rock shelters, rock wall alignments (possible sheep corrals), Hispanic crosses, and petroglyphs of livestock brands. These sheepherders were Atrisqueños, descendants of the Atrisco Land Grant holders who were granted an 82,000 acre parcel in 1692 by the King of Spain. The American Indian and Hispanic peoples of the area have a long and enduring relationship with the land and its resources.

RINCONADA CANYON HIKE



The trail that follows along the northern escarpment allows the hiker to view a variety of petroglyphs. The trail is 1.25 miles long to the head of the canyon and is moderately strenuous. There is not a definitive end to the trail; however, the petroglyphs become fewer as the trail turns south. You may return along the northern escarpment or continue hiking the southern escarpment which is

devoid of petroglyphs with the exception of a few at the mouth of the canyon at Unser Boulevard.

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

FOR YOUR SAFETY AND PROTECTION.....

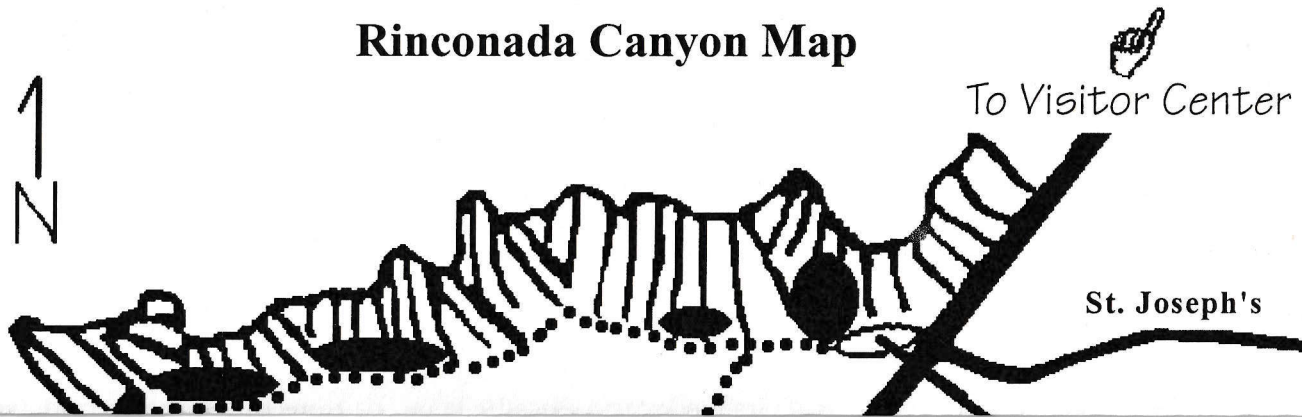
Please follow these simple guidelines while visiting Rinconada Canyon: Carry plenty of water and drink often, wear a hat, sunscreen, and sturdy walking shoes or boots, and watch out for the snakes which inhabit the canyon.

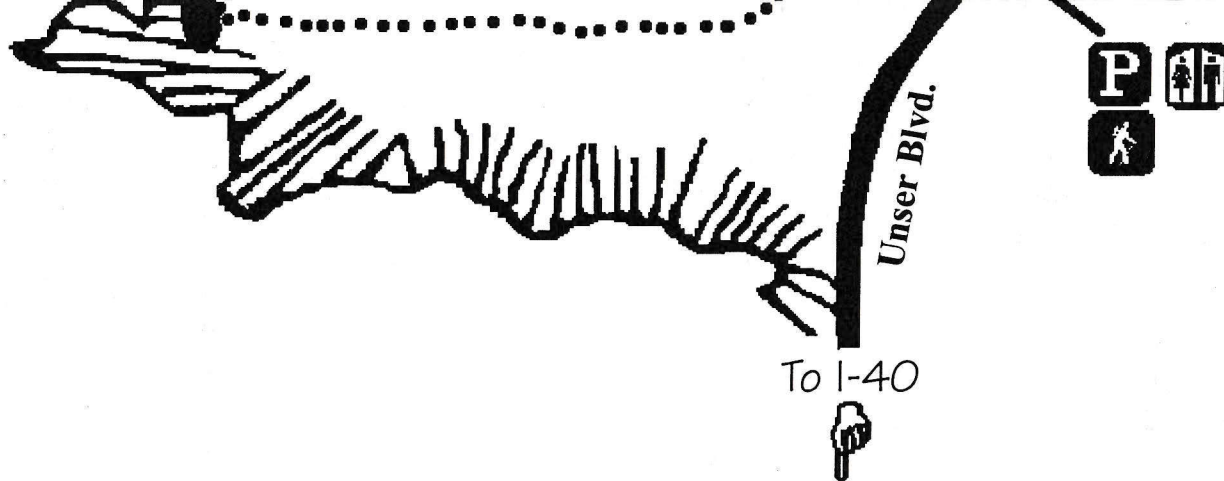
IMPORTANT NOTICE!!

Do not leave valuables or cash in your vehicle. Take them with you!!

Gates locked at 5:00 p.m.
If you plan to be in the canyon beyond 5:00 p.m., please park outside of the gate.

Rinconada Canyon Map





Legend

- Main Trail
- Petroglyph concentrations

Round trip distance:
2.5 -- 3 miles (4 -- 5 km)

WARNING!

REMOVING, DAMAGING, ALTERING OR DEFACING ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES WITHIN THIS NATIONAL MONUMENT IS PROHIBITED BY THE ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT OF 1979 (16 USC 470).

VIOLATIONS ARE PUNISHABLE BY A SIGNIFICANT FINE AND/OR IMPRISONMENT.

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**FOR ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION.....**

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