



# anasazi national monument

## Resource Assessment and Study of Alternatives

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A Planning Newsletter from the National Park Service

Number 3

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## INTRODUCTION

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The National Park Service (NPS) is continuing work on the *Anasazi National Monument Resource Assessment and Study of Alternatives* with assistance from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Colorado Historical Society, and the public. The first newsletter introduced you to the study, its purpose, and schedule. The second summarized the discussions at the public meetings in Cortez, Durango, and Denver. The purpose of this, the third and final newsletter, is to present the draft alternatives for your review and comment. Please keep in mind as you review the alternatives that the document will not identify a selected or preferred alternative; therefore, you do not need to select a specific alternative. Instead, we encourage you to look for anything we might have overlooked. Your comments will help us ensure that the document forwarded to Congress for their consideration and decision is both comprehensive and accurate.

Five alternative strategies for commemorating the Anasazi in southwestern Colorado were developed. The purposes of the alternatives are to protect archeological resources and encourage public visitation. Because of the many sites and site complexes in the study area, no single strategy will ensure the total protection of all northern Anasazi resources. Therefore, the alternatives emphasize the protection of sites that are as representative as possible of the full chronology and variety of northern Anasazi culture, while minimizing the federal acquisition of private lands. The identification of specific site complexes in this study should in no

way imply that other sites are not important or are not worthy of protection.

The alternative strategies are not mutually exclusive. Each alternative could stand on its own or several strategies - or individual elements within them - could be combined or implemented in phases. For example, alternative E could serve as phase one for any of the other alternatives.

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## ALTERNATIVES

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### **Alternative A: Establish a Northern Anasazi National Park**

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#### *Concept*

Under alternative A, a northern Anasazi national park would be established as a new unit of the national park system, and it would be administered by Mesa Verde National Park. This alternative would emphasize the federal ownership and protection of archeological sites associated with the northern Anasazi. The NPS would purchase sites, on a willing seller basis, that represent portions of the northern Anasazi not currently represented on publicly owned lands.

Site complexes that could be acquired include the Yellowjacket complex, Mud Springs ruin, Lancaster ruin, Ansel Hall ruin, and the non-NPS portions of the Goodman Point complex. Hovenweep National Monument would retain its identity as a separate national park system unit that is administered by Mesa Verde National Park. To ensure a full range of northern Anasazi sites, selected sites currently managed by the BLM or USFS could be either affiliated with

the national park system or transferred to the NPS.

A visitor center/headquarters would be located near the entrance to Mesa Verde National Park and would orient visitors to Mesa Verde as well as the northern Anasazi park. Depending on future planning, small interpretation and orientation centers could be located at major sites or sites clusters.

#### *Analysis*

This alternative presents a national park concept that emphasizes administration by a single agency. This would result in a less complicated administrative framework, but it would require substantial funding for land acquisition, and a substantial increase in the NPS budget for annual operations and needed studies.

### **Alternative B: Establish a Northern Anasazi Cultural Reserve**

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#### *Concept*

Alternative B would call for the creation of a northern Anasazi cultural reserve in southwestern Colorado. An interagency management group, consisting of representatives of the NPS, the USFS, the BLM, and the state of Colorado, as well as other landowners, as appropriate, would be established to coordinate management actions for the reserve. The management group would receive funding to coordinate research, planning, administration, and interpretation efforts among all participating entities, and to prepare a cooperative research design.

Current ownership and management of publicly owned sites would remain as now. To ensure the preservation of

additional archeological resources, while recognizing the valid existing rights of private landowners, private owners would be encouraged to cooperate with the agencies by means of cooperative agreements. Lands or interests in lands could be acquired by agencies, which would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Visitors would go to the various agency sites and centers to learn about opportunities throughout the region to visit additional Anasazi resources. There would be no central orientation point, but information and interpretive programs would be coordinated among the participating agencies.

#### *Analysis*

This alternative emphasizes inter-agency cooperation and coordination would be encouraged to integrate planning, interpretation, resource protection, research, and visitor services and facilities. By involving several entities, the potential scope of resource protection would be expanded, and site management and interpretative programs would be more comprehensive and consistent than at present.

### **Alternative C: Establish a Northern Anasazi Conservation Area**

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#### *Concept*

Alternative C emphasizes the continuation of multiple resource management and use, while ensuring the long-term protection of significant cultural resources through the establishment of a northern Anasazi conservation area. The USFS and the BLM, under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, would be the lead agencies for this alternative.

Sites would be evaluated and designated for preservation, research, interpretation, or other appropriate uses and management strategies by the BLM and the USFS. Cooperation by private owners of designated sites would be solicited through cooperative agreements, or by agency acquisition of lands or interests in lands on a case-by-case basis. Private lands would not be included in the conser-

vation area. It would encompass approximately 10,600 acres of USFS land, incorporating six areas, and approximately 156,000 acres of BLM land, incorporating 14 archeological complexes, only some of which were evaluated for this study.

The Anasazi Heritage Center, operated by the BLM, would be the focal point for visitor orientation and interpretation, research, and artifact storage. Additional facilities would be developed, depending on needs identified in the plan.

#### *Analysis*

Alternative C would result in the least disturbance to present and future multiple-use of resources on BLM and USFS lands, although some uses could be reduced if unacceptable impacts on cultural resources were identified. This alternative would also result in a greater level of protection for many sites under the jurisdiction of the BLM, regardless of their level of significance. The conservation area concept would be administratively uncomplicated because both the BLM and the USFS operate under multiple-use mandates.

### **Alternative D: Develop an Anasazi Cultural Heritage Partnership**

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#### *Concept*

Alternative D would seek to commemorate the entire Anasazi culture through a cooperative public/private partnership to coordinate resource management, research, and interpretation. The partnership would be guided by a commission that would be appointed, funded, and empowered to coordinate the project. Initially, only the northern Anasazi sites in southwestern Colorado would be included in the partnership. However, the concept could be expanded to include the entire Anasazi cultural region if Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico chose to participate.

The primary purposes of the commission would be to promote the preservation of resources significant to the Anasazi story, to encourage economic development associated with the preservation and interpreta-

tion (visitor use) of those resources, and to coordinate efforts among local, state, and federal units of government and the private sector. Similar commissions have been successful in America's Industrial Heritage Project in western Pennsylvania and Lowell National Historical Park in Lowell, Massachusetts.

The commission would establish criteria and recommend which sites should be protected through the partnership, and it would develop guidelines and standards to preserve site and to coordinate interpretation. Both privately and publicly owned sites could be associated with the system upon approval of the commission, based on established criteria and standards. Additional sites could be purchased by individual agencies, as appropriate, following their own planning and mandates.

A functional headquarters and visitor orientation center for southwestern Colorado would be established in or near Cortez. In-depth interpretation would be provided at the Anasazi Heritage Center.

#### *Analysis*

This alternative would provide a focal point for Anasazi-related activities by coordinating management, interpretation, and research. Visitor education and increased awareness would be the primary tools to protect sites. Sites included in the system would be managed according to a mutually agreed upon set of management and preservation guidelines.

The use of public/private commission would foster partnerships that could be flexible in directing money and would offer opportunities for private sector incentives and involvement. However, administration would be extremely complex and would depend on adequate base funding for the commission as well as on dynamic input from the commission members. In order for agencies to interact with and assist the commission, additional staff could be required. The implementation of this alternative would require significant planning and evaluation time.

## Alternative E: Foster a Southwestern Colorado Tourism Marketing Partnership

### Concept

The intent of this minimum action alternative would be to enhance regional visitation by coordinating federal agency orientation and interpretation services. Goals of the programs would be to encourage visitors to extend and make the most of their stays in the region, as well as to increase public appreciation for the significance of regional natural and cultural resources. This alternative could stand alone, or it could be combined with any of the other alternatives. The marketing partnership could be expanded to include coordination with other area tourism-related groups and businesses, such as local chambers of commerce, museums, the narrow-gauge railroad,

and nearby ski areas. A work group made up of representatives from participating entities would be organized to generate joint projects that would increase visitation and encourage appropriate high-quality tourist development. Activities could include producing information and marketing materials, developing visitation or tour packages, jointly staffing information stations or centers, and participating in tourism studies. Federal agency representatives would provide information, technical and professional expertise.

### Analysis

This alternative could be implemented quickly and at little cost to any one agency. Some additional funding would be required, however, to cover staff time and other expenses such as the printing of informational materials. Expanding this concept to include coordination with other

tourism entities could increase the needed funding. Some additional operational costs could also be anticipated because more widespread information would likely increase visitation to some sites and facilities.

This alternative would enhance regional visitation and would help visitors enrich their stays in the region but no direct measures would be taken to protect archeological resources, aside from increased public awareness.

## Comments

Please send your comments on the alternatives before August 31, to Robert Heyder, Superintendent, Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado 81330. Thank you for your interest in this project.

## Comparison of Alternative Actions and Impacts

	Alternative A: National Park	Alternative B: Cultural Reserve	Alternative C: Conservation Area	Alternative D: Cultural Heritage Partnership	Alternative E: Tourism Market- ing Partnership
Lead Agency	NPS	Interagency and private	BLM/USFS	Interagency/private commission	Interagency and private
Scope of Site Preservation	Protection of selected federal sites	Broad public/private protection	Broad federal protection	Broad public/private protection	N/A
Private Land Acquisition	Some	Minimal	Minimal	None anticipated	N/A
Impact on Multiple-Use Management of Federal Lands	Some land removed from multiple use management	Potential for some reduction	Little change	Little change	N/A
Implementation Timing	Immediate	5-year lag time during joint planning	Immediate	2-5 year lag time during planning and start up	Immediate, visible results
Visitation Increase	Concentrated at selected sites	Widespread	Widespread	Widespread in Four Corners area	Sites other than Anasazi promoted