



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

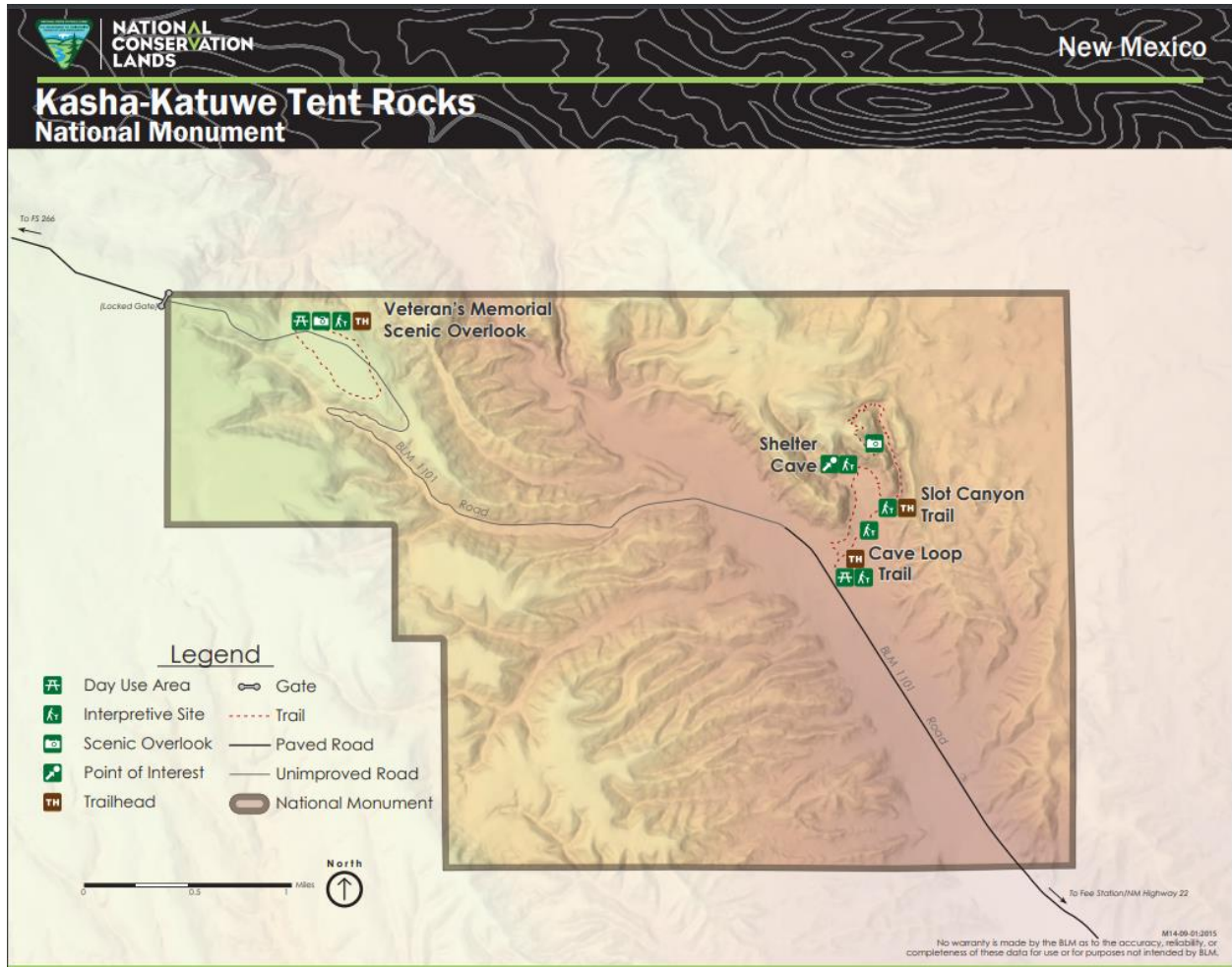
New Mexico
FY2021 Annual Manager's Report

Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks

National Monument



Map



Accomplishments

In the March 2020, BLM closed the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument (Monument) in cooperation with Pueblo de Cochiti. During the closure, BLM has had the opportunity to work on resource protection projects and planning projects to enhance the visitor experience upon reopening. The Monument has published its [Draft Business Plan](#) outlining the current state of the Monument Recreation Program to ensure consistency with required statutes and laws and establishes future management goals and priorities of the program. This business plan also proposed a fee increase from \$5 per vehicle to \$5 per person. This fee increase was approved by the Northern New Mexico Resource Advisory Council in August 2021. Continued discussion with Cochiti Pueblo will occur on how to implement the new fee structure.

A safety assessment was conducted by the New Mexico State Office Safety Officer in Spring of 2021. It outlined safety concerns on the trails, as well as COVID-19 safety concerns (e.g. overcrowding and close contact in certain parts of the trail), to consider in the reopening plan. This assessment was instrumental in the development of the business plan and its proposed visitation limitations. Within this plan, several points along Slot Canyon Trail were indicated as needing maintenance and safety features to provide visitors with a safer recreation experience.

Along with the safety assessment, a contracted specialist from National Park Service assessed the trail and completed a trail stabilization report. Within the report it detailed specific segments in need of stabilization and/or full reconstruction. This project is still in the scoping phase. BLM is in consultation with the Pueblo of Cochiti about this project.

Boundary fencing in the Southwest Acquisition (southwest corner of the Monument) was completed in December 2021. The fencing repaired weak spots in an existing fence where cattle consistently trespassed into the Monument. Plans to repair, maintain, and erect the remainder of the boundary fencing is ongoing.

Maintenance of facilities has been performed regularly during the closure (e.g. trail maintenance, facility painting, and other facility repairs).



1 Geological formations in the Monument

Challenges

The Monument has had many challenges presented by COVID-19 over the past couple years. The initial closure was an attempt to reduce COVID-19 exposure to the gateway community of Pueblo de Cochiti. Since then, BLM has decided to maintain the closure of the Monument until a reopening plan has been finalized. BLM continues to work in close cooperation with the Pueblo de Cochiti to develop a reopening plan to address long standing issues including over-visitation, long wait times, staffing needs, and the ability to provide resource protection.

The Rio Puerco Field Office continues to receive many inquiries from the public regarding reopening status. A reopening plan was submitted to the Pueblo in 2021 which is evolving with updated guidance and changes in leadership direction. One of the primary concerns of the reopening is access to the monument. In 2021, Tribal Route 92 was removed from the National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory (NTTFI). This road serves as the only route BLM and the public have to access the Monument. Management is continuing discussions with the Pueblo and BLM leadership in efforts to resolve the access issue.



2 Trail Closure Picture

Visitors

Over the years the Monument has become popular beyond the local community. The Monument receives visitors from all over the nation and across the world. Average annual use has grown exponentially. The Monument saw over 110,000 visitors annually for the past 5 fiscal years that the Monument was open. This visitation rate has brought noticeable resource degradation, safety issues, and a lower quality of visitor experience.

Due to the ongoing closure since 2020, the Monument has seen no visitation in FY 2021. Only employees are going in at present to conduct resource protection, monitoring, and assessments for future projects.

Upon reopening, BLM plans for a reduced visitation rate to be more in compliance to the area's Resource Management Plan (RMP). This RMP analyzed a stable visitation amount between 50,000 to 75,000 visitors annually. Through Recreation.gov the BLM can manage visitor use to protect resources and provide a more positive visitor experience. Recreation.gov, visitation limits, and supplementary rules are being evaluated in an Environmental Assessment to be completed by the time of reopening.



3 Youth enjoying the Monument

Partnerships

As a part of the *Connecting with Communities: BLM Recreation Strategy*, the BLM recognizes the need for collaborative relationships with community service partners in recreation. These networks include locally based government agencies at all levels, including city, county, tribal, state, and federal. Private sector industries and businesses are also key service providers, including educational institutes, commercial tour providers, retail businesses, and other nongovernmental organizations. The BLM intends to increase and improve collaboration with community service providers by fostering current partnerships and identifying and developing new ones. Partnership in community networks will enable the BLM to manage recreation resources on public lands to deliver social, economic, and environmental goals.

One of the most unique partnerships in BLM is the one with Pueblo de Cochiti. This long-standing relationship ensures collaboration between BLM and the Pueblo, not only for tribal consultation, but also for input on management practices and projects at the monument.

Presidential Proclamation 7294 directs the BLM to work in close cooperation with the Pueblo. The RMP added additional objectives between the Pueblo:

- Enhance the manageability of the Monument [RU-2a].
- Provide for resource protection, and visitor health and safety [RU-2b].
- Provide outstanding customer service for visitors while controlling visitor use [RU-2c].
- Provide for economic opportunity through employment and services [RU-2d].
- Ensure continuity of traditional tribal practices [RU-2e].
- Maintain tranquility for the Pueblo de Cochiti [RU-2f].

This collaboration ensures that objectives in the Monument Plan are met and that the BLM and the Pueblo's concerns are sought out, recognized, and addressed. BLM continues regular tribal consultation with the Pueblo. The Monument continues conversations with the Pueblo to address long standing issues such as supplemental rules, Memorandums of Understanding, and access.

Since the closure in 2020, one Pueblo employee hired under an Intergovernmental Personnel Agreement (IPA) has continued to work for the monument. This individual has served as a liaison between the Pueblo and BLM. He also monitored the Monument objects and values.

Fifteen closure days have been implemented to coincide with various traditional or sacred days to provide privacy for the Pueblo members. The fifteen closure dates are as follows: January 1; January 6; Friday before Easter; Easter Saturday; Easter Sunday;

Monday after Easter; May 3; July 13 & 14; July 25; November 1; Thanksgiving Day; December 24; December 25; and December 31.



4 Visitors to the Monument

Science

The Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument Science Plan was completed in August 2020. No further action on science related projects have been done to date.



5 Close up of Apache plum in the Monument



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument

National Monument

Rio Puerco Field Office
Bureau of Land Management
100 Sun Ave, Suite 330
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: 505-761-8700

Report compiled by: Jamie Garcia, Outdoor Recreation Planner

The mention of company names, trade names, or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by the federal government.