



**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

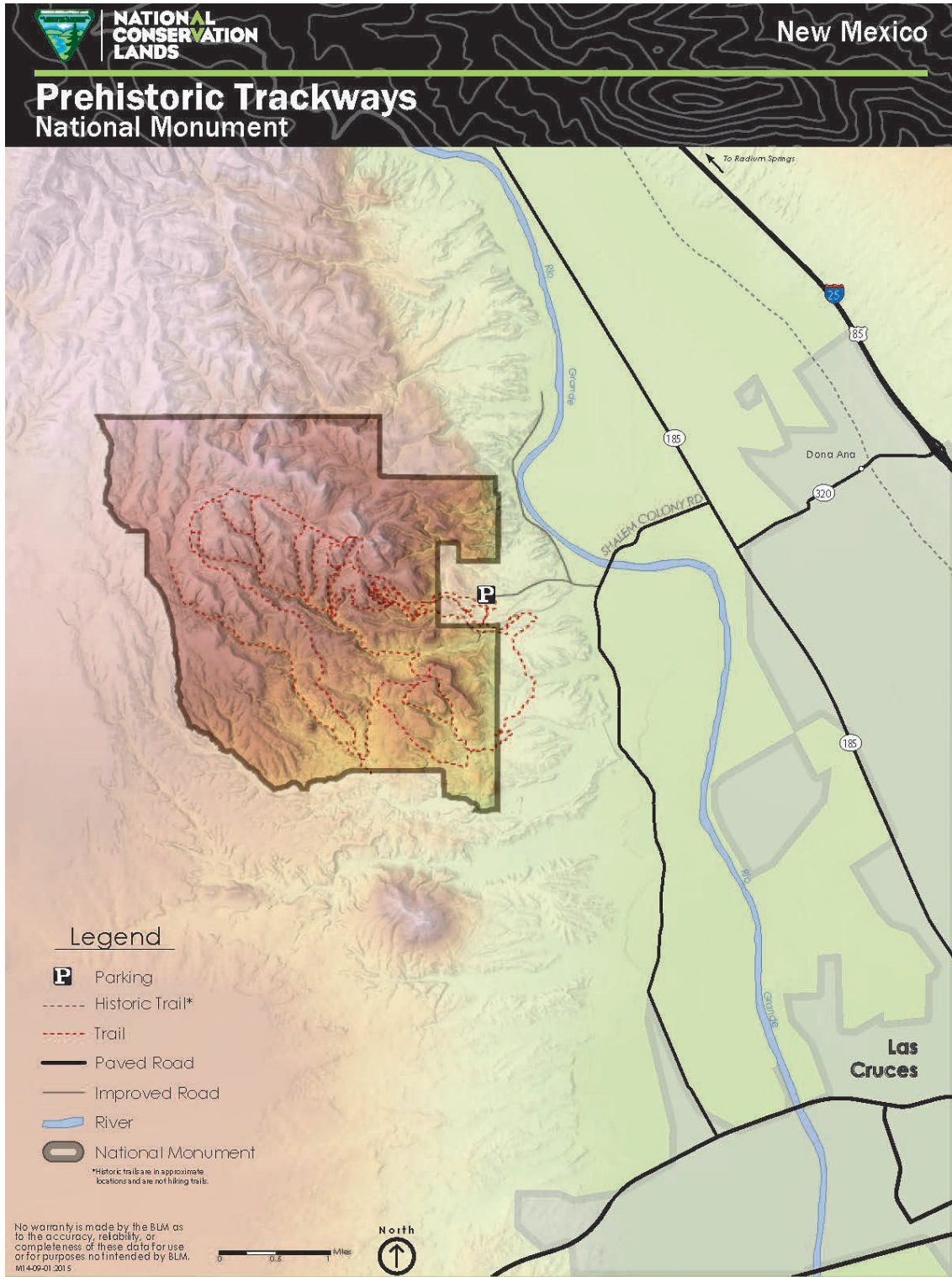
New Mexico
2022: Annual Manager's Report

Prehistoric Trackways

National Monument



Map



Accomplishments

Prehistoric Trackways National Monument (PTNM) had many accomplishments this year, despite challenges presented by COVID-19. Park Rangers monitored more than 1,600 acres of Wilderness and 15 miles of Recreation Trails. Partnering with the Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance, the Monument staff maintained six miles of trail in the Monument. They also rerouted and added a retaining wall on the Discovery Trail to make the trail safer and easier for visitors to enjoy. Park Rangers signed the boundaries of the Monument, including marking Wilderness area boundaries.

The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Friends Group docent program led interpretive hikes on the Monument. The docents are all National Association of Interpretation Certified Interpretive Guides and are all signed up as official volunteers of the BLM. Over the course of Fiscal Year (FY) 22, the docents lead three hikes for 85 visitors. This relationship is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding between BLM, and the Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks.

In 2023, 80 acres within the Monument was proactively inventoried and surveyed for cultural resources which is a Monument value. Proactive cultural surveys are critical in building cultural resource inventories and in informing best management practices for cultural resources. The cultural inventory targeted areas within the Monument that have been subject to considerable recreational use or subject to future developments. During the surveys, one new cultural resource site was identified and recorded.

Three compliance inspections of grazing permittees were conducted. Grazing bills were issued on time for the Altamira and Picacho Peak Allotments.



Challenges

Continued use by visitors with larger recreational vehicles, such as campers or RVs, within the parking areas at PTNM for dispersed camping purposes has become an issue on weekends due to the limited size of the parking lots.

The Picacho Peak Allotment, partially on the Monument, continues to see an influx of recreationists. Recreationists continue to cause damage to fences by cutting them and removing gates. This allows cattle to get into private yards around the Picacho Peak subdivision and cause damage to landscapes.

Wilderness monitoring and patrolling by staff has shown increased use off the Permian Reef Road near the Robledo Mountains Wilderness Area. The area is a popular camping spot where vehicles will park and build campfire rings. During patrols, staff have broken up fire rings and collected trash as well as ensure that Wilderness boundary signage is still in place.

To curtail the impact of these challenges, staff have increased their patrols and presence in the Monument. BLM has also increased the number of interpretive programs with Leave No Trace principles interweaved in the messages.

Visitors

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the Monument's visitation decreased in 2022 with an estimated 36,894 visits. The Monument also started providing educational and interpretive resources again on site in the Monument. Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Friends Group docent program led three interpretive hikes and the Monument paleontologist led on hike (see photo below). BLM also increased its interpretive presence on-line through sharing video and written content on social media. During patrol duties, Park Rangers continued to search for opportunities to educate the public on outdoor ethics, regulations, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the area.



Partnerships

For FY 2022, The Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks continued to work closely with BLM staff in providing outreach and educational services to the visiting public, which also includes activities in Prehistoric Trackways National Monument. Below, docent Jim Enright (far right) providing the public with information about the Monument's geologic and paleontological diversity during a guide hike for PTNM's anniversary of its designation.



Science

Over the course of 2022, the Monument supported the research initiatives of one academic institution. In February 2022, researchers from the University of Calgary and associated academic institutions visited several locations around PTNM to collect fossil macroinvertebrates for their research to further refine the biostratigraphy (i.e., relative age of rock units from paleofauna).

Climate Impacts

The Monument is increasingly showing impacts of changing climatic change conditions. This includes an increase in temperatures over the course of the last century, a reduction of annual spring precipitation, and an increase in the severity of multiyear droughts. The changing climatic conditions on the Monument are anticipated to decrease grazing resources for livestock, threaten the viability of the Monument's flora and fauna ecological diversity, and increase the severity of wildfires over time.

Social and Environmental Justice

Monument staff are including English and Spanish text on informative and interpretive panels throughout the Monument as they are replaced, or new ones are created. The Monument also collaborates with local groups who focus interpretive and educational efforts for underserved communities. Some of the groups BLM partnered with include the Las Cruces Museum of Nature and Science, the Conservation Corps New Mexico, Public Lands Interpretive Association, Celebration of Our Mountains, Global University and Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks. Monument staff are gathering information to have the PTNM brochure translated to Spanish.

Events

Monument staff hosted clean ups involving the public. The clean ups included messaging to educate visitors about resource protection. Virtual events and social media posts were also produced throughout the year which provided viewers with educational information about the geology, paleontology, and cultural resource of PTNM.



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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/blmnewmexico/albums/72157630067551446>

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