

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Mesa Verde National Park

**Volunteer Handbook
2008**

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Introduction to the Mesa Verde Community Volunteer Program

The Uniqueness of Mesa Verde

Mesa Verde is unique in many ways -- one of the country's first national parks, its only cultural national park, and the first to be designated a world heritage site. Mesa Verde's museum was the first in the National Park Service, and NPS's first campfire talk was given there. Visitors from around the world come to this extraordinary park and the four corners area to experience the past and envision the future.

Program History and Contributions

The Community Volunteer Program grew out of the community support that proved essential to the success of the 2006 Mesa Verde Centennial celebration. In fact, that year's program was so successful that it received the coveted Hartzog Award for the nation's best volunteer program in the National Park Service. The NPS also recognized the contributions of Mesa Verde's Community volunteer coordinators by awarding them one of the seven Regional Hartzog Awards for individual contributions. Several elements of the 2006 program, including hosting at the Visitor Center, volunteer work projects, and support of special events in the park proved so valuable to the park and enjoyable for volunteers that they've become centerpieces of the continuing program.

The contributions you can make as a volunteer are numerous and varied; the most obvious is your time. Local volunteers significantly enhance the park's ability to serve its visitors by providing leadership and labor to projects that otherwise might not happen. Park staff must stay focused on serving the half million visitors welcomed to the park

each year and on protecting the valuable resource that is Mesa Verde. In addition to providing “additional arms and legs” for both continuing and special projects, we have time to develop new ideas and think of ways to complement the work of the professional staff.

Just as valuable to the park as your time is your knowledge and experience. Many of the interpretive rangers who provide the primary contact with the visitors are seasonal employees from around the country. They know the Mesa Verde story well and provide excellent service in the park; but community volunteers know the local area, can sometimes help put the park into context, and can assist visitors in enjoying their time in the four corners area. For many families, making a connection to a “local” contributes greatly to a memorable experience at Mesa Verde.

A less obvious aspect of the Community Volunteer Program – but one that is quite important – is the sense of ownership of the park that it gives us. The program is organized and run by local volunteers; and by working in the program, you may develop the sense that Mesa Verde is truly your park. Through our taxes, we hire the NPS staff to care for it, but it belongs to all of us. Through our work, we welcome the world to visit, learn Mesa Verde's lessons, and celebrate its heritage.

The “Five Rules”

During the Centennial events in 2006, five rules emerged that developed into the guidelines under which the volunteer program conducts each event and activity. Stated simply they are:

Be safe.

Have fun.

Enhance our visitors’ experiences.

Help the park staff with their jobs.
Be flexible.

When you're working in the park, your first rule is safety – don't allow your excitement, a visitor's enthusiasm or predicament, or an employee's request put you into a situation that isn't safe. The risks could be from falling, from lifting, from heat or cold or sun or lightning, from dealing with horses, from confronting guests, or from other things we haven't yet encountered. In any situation, you are the principal judge of what would be unsafe for you.

Two of the rules arise from the nature of volunteer work. You must feel good about the things you do in the park; if it's not "fun," you won't be back, and that's good neither for you nor for the program. Similarly, the nature of dealing with the public and of working on "special events" requires flexibility. In many assignments we can't predict how we'll be involved or what requests we'll receive.

Finally, whatever role we play should contribute to the experiences of our guests or, for some "behind the scenes" assignments, to the park's preservation mission.

Typical Comments from Volunteers

Volunteers experience the park and our roles in different ways; here are comments from some.

"It's amazing how much we contribute to the park. Visitors get here with no idea about how to experience it or even what to expect. With at least fifty families or groups a day, I feel like I can significantly increase their knowledge and the pleasure they get from the park."

"When I'm in the headquarters area, half the time that I'm pulling

weeds is spent with small groups – discussing the plants and their uses and how the native peoples must have lived. The kids are my favorite audience.”

“I thought I’d be directing traffic, but what I was actually doing could best be called ‘guest services.’ It’s amazing how many people see a line and join it without knowing why.”

“It’s certainly a long commute – too long – but once I get through the tunnel, that Mesa Verde magic gets me. Sometimes it almost brings tears to my eyes.”

“Those horses are the best ambassadors the park has; they are magnets in the campground. They draw the people, and then the questions start.”

“Without us, there was no way they would’ve gotten those signs painted this year, or even next.”

“I really like being at the kiosk. I am the park, I have a captive audience, and people actually believe what I say.”

Park Organization

The organizational structure of the park can be seen at its website, which is linked to this site. Volunteers have found opportunities in each of the park's five major groups:

Administration

Interpretation and Visitor Services

Visitor Protection and Fire Management

Research and Resources Management

Maintenance

The Park's Affiliated Organizations

(Information about the structure of the National Park Service's operations and contact information can be found on its website.)

Mesa Verde Museum Association

Activities of the Museum Association support research and education that are not funded by the government. Since 1920 Congress has recognized that such “partner” organizations can further the goals of the national parks; Mesa Verde’s Museum Association was the first of its kind in the National Park Service. Profits from sales in the park provide financial support for various programs focused on improving the experiences of park visitors as well as local communities and schools.

Mesa Verde Foundation

The new Visitor Center, planned near the park entrance, will require a combination of government funds and private donations. The current focus of the Mesa Verde Foundation is raising the necessary private funds to be used for construction of the education portions of the building, while government funding will build the research/archival portions.

ARAMark, Mesa Verde

ARAMark corporation, our park’s concessionaire, provides food service, lodging, camping, fuel, gift shops, and shower/laundry facilities. In addition, guided bus tours of the park are given by ARAMark employees.

The History of Mesa Verde

(Please visit the park's website for more complete and more current information about MV's history. The following is a slightly modified excerpt from the Handbook the park provides to its Seasonal Rangers.)

About 1400 years ago, a group of people we call Ancestral Puebloans lived in the Four Corners region and chose Mesa Verde for their home. For over 700 years, their descendants lived and flourished here, eventually building elaborate stone cities on the mesa tops and in the sheltered recesses of canyon walls. In the late 1200's, within the span of one or two generations, they left their homes and moved away.

Mesa Verde National Park, which occupies part of a large plateau rising high above the Montezuma and Mancos Valleys, preserves a spectacular remnant of their thousand-year old culture. Ever since local cowboys found the cliff dwellings a century ago, archeologists have been trying to understand the lives of these people. Despite decades of excavation, analysis, classification and comparison, our knowledge is still sketchy. We will never know the whole story of their existence for they left no written records and much information important about their lives has perished. Yet for all their silence, these sites speak with a certain eloquence. They tell of a people adept at building, artistic in their crafts, and skillful at living in a difficult land.

Taking advantage of the nature of the area, the Ancestral Puebloans of Mesa Verde built their dwellings on the mesa tops and under the overhanging cliffs. Their base construction material was sandstone, which they shaped into rectangular blocks. The mortar between the blocks was a mix of mud and water. Rooms averaged 6' x 8'.

Getting food was a continuous process. Farming was the mainstay; but they supplemented their crops of corn, beans, and squash by gathering wild plants and hunting deer, rabbits, squirrels and other game. Their only domestic animals were dogs and turkeys.

Fortunately for us, the Ancestral Puebloans tossed their trash nearby. Scraps of food, broken pottery and tools, anything unwanted went down the slope in front of their houses. Much of what we know about daily life here comes from these middens or refuse heaps.

Local Native Americans were aware of the cliff dwellings, but chose not to enter them for cultural or religious reasons. The first cliff dwelling in the Mesa Verde area known to have been entered by non-Native Americans was Two-Story Cliff House in Ute Mountain Tribal Park, explored by W.H. Jackson in September 1874. Jackson also discovered other small cliff dwellings, but Two-Story Cliff House was the only one he named.

In 1875, Sixteen Window House cliff dwelling was named. It was explored by W.H. Holmes, the leader of a government survey party that passed through Mancos Canyon. In 1884, Balcony House was entered by a prospector, S.E. Osborn, who left his name and the date March 20, 1884, in a dwelling in lower Soda Canyon.

On December 18, 1888, Richard Wetherill and his brother-in-law, Charles Mason, rode out on what is now Sun Point in search of lost cattle and first saw Cliff Palace. That afternoon, Richard discovered Spruce Tree House; and, the next day, the two men discovered Square Tower House. Al Wetherill, Richard's brother, had seen Cliff Palace sometime the year before but had not entered the dwelling. Richard Wetherill and Charles Mason, who actually entered the site, are credited for its discovery.

In 1889, four of the Wetherill brothers returned to Mesa Verde to explore the sites. In a 15-month period, they claimed to have entered 182 cliff dwellings, 106 in Navajo Canyon alone. Between 1887 and 1892, the Wetherills made several trips into Mesa Verde primarily for collecting archeological material.

Gustaf E. Nordenskiöld of Sweden visited Mesa Verde in 1891. He is credited with being the first scientist to visit any of the cliff dwellings. He made a collection of about 600 items which were sent to Sweden and are now in the National Museum in Helsinki, Finland.

Although the *Denver Tribune Republican* had first suggested that Mesa Verde be set aside as a National Park in an editorial printed December 12, 1886, it wasn't until 1906 that Congress passed legislation creating Mesa Verde National Park. This same Congress also passed the American Antiquities Act of 1906. This act made it a federal crime to collect or destroy any historic or prehistoric object or building on federally owned land.

Today, Mesa Verde consists of more than 52,000 acres, and there are over 4,800 known archeological sites, approximately 600 of which are cliff dwellings. Only a few have been excavated. Unoccupied for many centuries, they have been weakened by natural forces, and some were badly damaged by looters before the area was made a national park.

Volunteer Roles and Opportunities

Mesa Verde's community volunteers do everything from painting benches and clearing trails to developing education programs and advising visitors with acrophobia that they might want to avoid the ranger-guided tour to Balcony House. Indeed, there is something appropriate and interesting for everyone who signs up to volunteer, whether it's weekly at the Visitor Center, sporadically at special events, or annually at December's Open House, filling and placing luminaria bags. In each case, volunteers will join the national group of VIP's (Volunteers in Parks), receive training specific to Mesa Verde and its offerings, and be welcomed into the group of enthusiastic and energetic community friends.

The VIP Program

By joining the Community Volunteer Program, an individual becomes part of a national effort involving more than 125,000 people who donate more than 5 million hours to parks. The VIP program was authorized nearly forty years ago; and nationwide participation, just like the time and talent contributions here at Mesa Verde, continues to grow. At Mesa Verde, opportunities fall into four categories (including, of course, the infamous "other").

Guest Services

Far View Visitor Center

One or two volunteers work every day during the summer season from 9:30 to 1:30 at the Visitor Center, partnering with the Rangers who advise guests about Ranger-guided tours and other options available to guests. The Visitor Center is usually the first stop after the entrance station. There guests must buy their tickets for Cliff Palace, Balcony

House, and Long House tours; without buying the tickets at the V.C., guests cannot tour those sites.

Volunteers use the volunteer-developed Visitor Center Guides to describe those tours and to suggest other options for guests whose abilities, time or interests would preclude touring those sites. Armed with pictures of the most popular sites and their access, we are able to help visitors make more informed choices in planning their stay before they get to the head of the line to buy tickets.

In addition, we can answer both basic and detailed questions about the park and the Four Corners region. Our local experience and knowledge of the area and its history is sometimes better than that of seasonal Rangers who are often new to our area – and we frequently have more time available to answer questions and interact with the visitors. Most volunteers have found this opportunity quite rewarding.

Cliff Palace Kiosk

The Cliff Palace water kiosk is operated by the Museum Association at the request of the Park Service. The Museum Association is a non-profit partner who operates two bookstores in the park and one at the Cortez Visitor Center. A major focus of the Association is education; but they also perform visitor services, selling bottled water, Cliff Palace and Balcony House pamphlets, and a small assortment of other items at the kiosk. Any proceeds help fund the Museum Association's educational programs.

The volunteer program has agreed to help staff the kiosk from noon to 5:00 during the summer season. Selling water at this location is important to the health of visitors, especially those from less arid climates, who might otherwise become dehydrated on their ranger-guided tours of Cliff Palace and Balcony House. In addition, it's a great

opportunity to interact with visitors while they wait for their tour to begin. Many of us find this assignment even more fun and rewarding than the Visitor Center because we can talk in greater depth with fewer people at a time, since we are frequently the only “park people” around.

Horse Volunteers

During the summers of 2007 and 2008, experts – both in riding and in guest services – assisted the park’s Rangers in reestablishing the traditional presence of mounted Rangers in the park. Thistle and Mesa, the park’s two steeds, were cared for, groomed, and ridden both by Rangers and by these volunteers. Visitors to Morefield Campground were frequently treated to interactions both with horses and with riders who welcomed guests, answered questions about the park and the region, and suggested activities appropriate for adults and children. Our volunteers discovered quickly that their horses provided a great icebreaker for otherwise shy children, and were perhaps especially helpful in interacting with non-English-speaking guests.

Volunteer riders have the same training in guest services and park operations as do the non-riding volunteers. In addition, they must meet the standards of horsemanship, assessed by the Ranger in charge of the horses. These volunteer riders also participate in other volunteer opportunities and activities.

Incidental Guest Interactions

Because we usually wear our uniforms or at least the volunteer hats, the community volunteers find that visitors often stop us anywhere in the park to ask questions, sometimes mistaking us for paid staff. These “incidental contacts” are frequently quite rewarding for us and especially meaningful and helpful for the visitors. Whether working on trail maintenance, landscaping, sign painting, or just hiking the trails or

having lunch, volunteers are sought out by visitors with questions about activities, flora and fauna, fire history, and especially, “isn’t there another way out of here – I’m scared of that narrow, winding road.”

Partly because of the success and pleasure of these interactions and partly because the park is under-funded and thus understaffed, some volunteers choose to spend time helping visitors at the Far View Sites. To do so, volunteers must learn about the sites so they are sufficiently prepared to answer questions or to direct visitors to people who can answer them.

Special Programs and Events

Each year the park plans programs and events that are outside of the regular schedule. These events will be addressed more specifically in the calendar at the end of this handbook; but some examples are Junior Ranger Day, Verde Fest, Native American Arts and Crafts Festival, fund-raising dinners, December’s Open House and Luminaria Lighting, Public Lands Day, and the Night Skies Programs.

Volunteer opportunities are usually available at each event, but the particular activities vary with the event itself. Ordinarily, there are needs for helping with setting up and breaking down the venues, helping with parking, giving directions and answering questions, planning and conducting educational activities, and “other duties as assigned.” Usually we find some way to turn any event into a “guest services” function, because that’s what many of us enjoy.

Maintenance

Maintenance activities in general have fallen into two broad categories – trails and “other.” Sometimes these are done during an

organized Work Day, other times by individuals or groups donating time when they can. “Other” has included painting all the benches in Morefield Amphitheater; painting park signs; assembling new picnic tables; cleaning up, pruning, and weeding landscaped areas; and even mending fences. In 2008, a group of volunteers were trained as "graffiti busters" and worked along side park staff to remediate some of the damage caused by thoughtless visitors. Usually there are more volunteers available than there are specific projects – but as the volunteer program has developed over the past several years, the park staff has increasingly become more comfortable accepting help in these areas.

Trails require routine maintenance, but frequently they are lower priority for the Maintenance Staff than other more immediate needs. In the past two years, volunteers have worked to maintain both the 2.1-mile Spruce Canyon Trail and the 2.8-mile Petroglyph Point Trail. Trail work and other maintenance activities are usually strenuous and dusty, but fun and rewarding at the same time -- great stories usually arise.

Other Assignments

Volunteers are often called on to assist the park in other ways. Examples have included working to archive research data – this has involved development of data systems as well as data entry into those systems – conducting star or solar-flare watching opportunities in the park, developing and conducting education programs for families, overseeing stage coach rides in the park, assisting in the park’s research library, helping with registration and hosting at park conferences, and collecting and cataloging items for silent auctions.

Volunteer Benefits and Responsibilities

Getting Started

It's easy to become a part of the Community Volunteer Program and begin contributing to Mesa Verde. After completing the following six steps, you are a part of the program:

Make contact with the volunteer coordinators, either directly or through the park

Complete the VIP (Volunteers in Parks) application from NPS

Attend training for new volunteers to learn how the park works

Identify areas of interest to you

Get specialized training or shadow an experienced volunteer in that area

Work with an experienced volunteer at the Visitor Center or Cliff Palace kiosk

What You Should Expect While Volunteering

In their assignments, community volunteers should expect the following:

Appropriate assignments; variety, as desired

Respect, treatment as a co-worker

Training for the assignment; guidance

Information about the park, the program, the duties

Emergency support
Being treated administratively as an employee (accident insurance, etc.)
Easy access to the volunteer coordinators; being kept “in the loop”
Reasonable, safe working conditions
Uniform and nametag, if appropriate
Feedback
Recognition and appreciation for your efforts
A voice in the program; to be heard and to be part of planning

Training

Training is repeatedly mentioned in this handbook, and it will come in several forms. Formal training for new volunteers will be held each spring and can be repeated informally as needed throughout the year. Training sessions for all volunteers will be held throughout the spring and summer and will often highlight areas of the park or the surrounding area that hold information that Mesa Verde volunteers would find useful in their assignments. Finally, ad hoc training for specific assignments will be scheduled as appropriate.

What's Expected of You

Uniforms

Please wear your uniform whenever you're providing a Guest Services function, including at the Visitor Center, Cliff Palace kiosk, Far View Sites information, parking for special events, and riding for the Horse Program. Uniforms may be worn at other times in the park whenever you are willing to fulfill the guest services function. There is no need to wear uniform shirts when you are doing trail maintenance,

working behind the scenes, attending training, or doing other activities where you would not expect visitor contact.

Uniform shirts and hats are provided by the Park; they are in somewhat short supply, so, unless you are working back-to-back days, please check out only one shirt. Polo shirts are available in women's sizes S, M, L, and XL and men's in M, L, and XL; work-style shirts are available in men's sizes S, M, L, and XL. All shirts and hats display Park Volunteer insignia. Brown pants are preferred, but khaki or beige is acceptable. Please do not wear blue jeans, shorts, or dark green pants for visitor contact; green is reserved for the Rangers.

Nametags will be provided either by the Park or by the Volunteer Coordinators. If lost, they can be replaced at cost.

Timeliness

Community volunteers have earned a great reputation for being where they should be when they should be. In our first three seasons, 2006 to 2008, there have been only two times when volunteers were scheduled for a guest services function and failed to be there. The first was when two regular volunteers apparently failed to return the money bag after the closing time for Cliff Palace. The Museum Association employee responsible for checking the money grew concerned about the missing money and sent out an alert, including notifying the Law Enforcement Rangers and calling the Volunteer Coordinators. She was embarrassed, but relieved, the next day when she learned that the volunteers had stayed late at the kiosk to help a stranded visitor and had not finished their assignment until an hour after she had gone home. The second was a communication problem. The volunteer coordinator had sent out the month's schedule for the kiosk by email – forgetting that one of the volunteers uses only “snail mail.” Some switching around occurred, and the time slot was finally covered. All in all, not a

bad track record!

The point of those stories is that the park staff has learned to count on us -- to be where we say we'll be when we say we'll be there. That reputation is important to our continued success in the park. If you need to change a date or assignment, please just let the volunteer coordinators (or the site coordinators, for Visitor Center or Cliff Palace) know as soon as possible.

Recording Hours

Please count and **report to the volunteer coordinators your hours each month**; include travel, training, and work time. It's important to the volunteer program – and especially to the park itself. Some volunteer awards are available, and time donated is often a deciding factor. In addition, the park is required to report volunteer hours on an annual basis. Some budget items reflect volunteer contributions.

Feedback

Communication has proven to be critical to the success of the volunteer program. The program coordinators aim for the right balance -- communicating frequently enough to keep everyone in the loop but not so often that people refuse to open “even one more email.” If you have comments or suggestions, please let them know so that they can make adjustments.

Routine communication about times, places, events, results, etc., is really important, but so is your feedback. Those doing the work often have the best ideas for improving it. If you have a suggestion, concern, frustration, or anything else, please communicate with the coordinators. This may be especially true for frustrations; one role they have is to resolve issues that might arise.

Reimbursement

Unfortunately, the short answer is that none is available. Very infrequently, at the end of the fiscal year, the park receives a small amount of additional funding. Some of this might be available to volunteers to reimburse for gas or other expenses. That said, if you can arrange to carpool, the volunteer coordinators will try to ensure that you both are scheduled as you request.

Recognition

The most frequent, and perhaps the most meaningful, recognition comes from the comments you receive from the visitors – or perhaps those you overhear in conversation (assuming, of course, that you're fluent in whatever language the guest speaks). Visitors have commented that volunteers have “saved their day,” “made them want to return,” “led to our deciding to stay around here longer than we planned,” or, our favorite, “should be paid more.”

You'll also be “recognized” by the park staff. Some of the Rangers have been very vocal with their praise of the program and especially of the individual volunteers. Some have even gone so far as to say, “Don't even think about moving (him, her) to another spot!” Volunteers learn to recognize recognition in any form, including threats.

Lastly, the park's supervisory staff, from individual managers to the assistant superintendent, has worked to recognize volunteers. In the falls of 2007 and 2008, recognition cookouts were held, with the supervisors cooking dinner and awarding park memorabilia to volunteers. It was a great end to a great season!

We're Invitees

It's hard to imagine that volunteers must be invited to give their time, energy, and expertise to departments or individuals of the park, but it's true. Sometimes volunteers **are** seen as more trouble than they're worth. The Community Volunteers have worked very hard not to interfere with the traditions, habits, or territory of the park's staff. Sometimes it's difficult not to jump in if we think we see a better, faster, cheaper, or longer lasting way, but it's critical to our continuing program to step with respect on the territory of others. Try to remember, "When in the Park, do as the Park does." And also remember that the coordinators would like to hear your suggestions for improvements and will carry them forward.

The Community Volunteers serve at the behest of the Park and can be let go without cause. We can be uninvited – or worse, not invited. If there are issues that arise, please communicate with the volunteer coordinators rather than trying to solve the problem yourself.

The Volunteer Year

In the three years since the park's Centennial celebration the volunteer program has developed a rhythm that carries it through each calendar year. The dates and details may vary from year to year, but the broad outline remains the same, with the peak of activity in the summer.

Feb/Mar dinner)	Season kickoff (in 2007 & 2008 this was a potluck dinner)
April/May	Training for new volunteers Training day for all volunteers
Memorial Day	Native American Arts Show Start of summer activities (VC, CP, horse program, etc.)
June, July, & August (each month)	Workday Trail maintenance Special event/celebration Monthly Training days Landscaping
Labor Day	End of summer activities
September/October	Workday Final Training day
October	End of season recognition
December	Luminaria open house

Behind the scenes work (research support, general maintenance, landscaping, etc.) is performed as appropriate throughout the year, and training of new volunteers is done as needed.

Park Information

Facts and Frequently Asked Questions

As you volunteer in the park, you'll encounter numerous questions, some easy, some difficult, some humorous but all important to the questioner. Three we'll answer here; the others are for you to research, and they can't come close to covering all you'll be asked.

First, why's it called Mesa Verde?

We guess that Mesa Verde got its name from its appearance as a green table when it is approached from the east along the early Spanish trade route between Santa Fe and the missions of California.

Second, why are the people who lived here called Ancestral Puebloans?

The park has worked over the past few years to increase Native American participation. The most obvious descendents of the Mesa Verde people inhabit the pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona, and some of them find the Navajo term "Anasazi" objectionable (though it is a term widely used in archaeology). To encourage their continued participation, the park has chosen to use the more accurate term of "Ancestral Puebloan," which subtly addresses the issue of where the people went when they migrated away from Mesa Verde.

Third, I've heard people call the structures "ruins," but lately I've heard that's not right. Why?

Through time, the Mesa Verde people often left villages for a generation or two and returned when the crop land had recovered. From that perspective, the sites in this area are not "ruins," but rather are the

former homes of ancestors and potential future homes for descendants.

Other questions about the park

What is there for kids to do?

How can I enjoy the park if I'm mobility impaired?

When do the sites/does the park close?

Do I have to take a guided tour?

What languages are tours conducted in?

What can I see on my own?

Why can't I take food/drinks into sites?

Where can we smoke?

Where can our dog run?

How long does it take ... for a tour; to get to Wetherill; to drive out ... etc.?

Where can we get lunch/dinner?

Where's gas?

Why are the trees black? When was the fire?

What hiking trails are available?

How high are we?

Is there another way out?

Where can I buy groceries? books? water? souvenirs?

What wildlife is here?

Are those wild horses?

Questions about the area

How long does it take to get to ...? (the four corners monument is a common one)

What books would you recommend about ... ?

Are there other sites available in the area?

Where can we go to see native dancers or craftspeople?

What other recreation is available around here?

Visitation Statistics

Year	Number of Visitors	Year	Number of Visitors
1906	27	1960	225,708
1910	250	1970	527,207
1920	2890	1980	540,826
1930	16,741	1990	611,375
1940	36,172	2000	471,084
1950	88,184	2005	519,649

APPENDIX I

Overview of Park

(Modified from Mesa Verde Seasonal Ranger's Handbook)

Mesa Verde National Park was created in 1906 as the first national park to protect the works of humans and is famed worldwide as a premier archeological reserve. Recognized by the United Nations in 1978 as America's first World Heritage Site, Mesa Verde embodies a legacy of preservation and a celebration of the past. *National Geographic Traveler* named the Park as one of the fifty "must see" places of a lifetime and readers of *Conde Nast Traveler* selected Mesa Verde "number one" in the Top Monuments category. And it is easy to see why.

Mesa Verde, Spanish for green table, is home to Peregrine falcons, golden eagles, deer, coyote, bobcat, bighorn sheep, bear and mountain lions. The Park preserves the archeological heritage of the Ancestral Pueblo people who made their home atop this large plateau high above the Montezuma and Mancos Valleys for over 700 years, from AD 600 to AD 1300. Archeologists called these people *Anasazi*, from a Navaho word sometimes translated as "the ancient foreigners." They now call them *Ancestral Puebloans* reflecting their modern descendants.

Ancestral Puebloans were descended from nomadic hunting and gathering peoples who occupied the Southwest several thousand years before the time of Christ. Food plants, originally domesticated in Mexico, spread to the Southwest through trade. People were then able to produce food as well as collect it. Although Ancient Puebloan raised crops of corn, beans and squash, such food probably made up only half their diet. They still relied on hunting and gathering skills passed down by their ancestors. Around 1200, the Ancestral Puebloans abandoned their mesa top homes and settled in alcoves, caves and overhangs along the canyon walls. Some, however, continued to live (or at least use ceremonial sites) on the mesa tops.

Pueblo Indians along the Rio Grande and in Arizona and New Mexico are descendants of Ancestral Puebloans. Despite four centuries of contact (and sometime conflict) with European culture, Pueblo Indians continue a way of life developed over centuries by their ancestors. As such, the Ancestral Puebloan heritage lives on today.

Mesa Verde National Park occupies 52,053 acres, boasts more than 4,500 archeological sites, 600 of which are cliff dwellings (most, however, are unexcavated and closed to the public) and houses nearly 3 million artifacts and curated relics. These treasures give modern-day researchers an unparalleled opportunity to study and understand ancient lifeways of early American Southwest inhabitants.

The Park encompasses a series of sub mesas, much like the back of your hand with your fingers spread wide apart. Hundreds of villages and farming areas once dotted the tops of these mesas, with cliff dwellings in the canyons between the narrow fingers of land. Mesa

Verde's entire history is captured in these mesa-top sites, from primitive underground pithouses to multi-storied stone villages. It was only in the last 100 years of Puebloan history that the famous cliff dwellings were built.

Each destination in the Park has its own attraction, activity and facilities and many are several miles apart from each other. It takes planning for the average of 5,000 visitors each day, to get the most from their trips.

ENTRANCE fees vary with the visitors' category and time of year, as follows:



Category	Jan 1 through May 26, 2007 and Sept 4 through December 31, 2007	May 27 through Sept 3, 2007	Valid
Private Vehicles	\$10	\$15	7 days from date of purchase
Motorcyclists, Bicyclists and Walk-ins	\$5	\$8	7 days from date of purchase
Individuals on non-commercial buses			7 days from purchase
Commercial tours , 1 to 6 persons excluding driver	\$25, plus \$5 for each person 16 years or older	\$25, plus \$8 for each person 16 years or older	7 days from date of purchase, provided tour maintains same group of persons for each re-entry
Commercial tours , 7 to 15 persons excluding driver	\$75	\$75	7 days from date of purchase, provided tour maintains same group of persons for each re-entry
Commercial tours , 16 to 25 persons excluding driver	\$100	\$100	7 days from date of purchase, provided tour maintains same group of persons for each re-entry
Commercial tours , 26 or more persons excluding driver	\$200	\$200	7 days from date of purchase, provided tour maintains same group of persons for each re-entry
Ranger guided tours required for access to	\$3 per person no, matter what age	\$3 per person, no matter what age	Date and time printed on ticket

Balcony House, Cliff Palace and Long House			
Annul Pass	\$30	\$30	One year from date of purchase

In addition, the Park participates in the National Park and Federal Lands Pass Program and sells and accepts those passes.

	Interagency Annual	Interagency Senior	Interagency Access	Interagency Volunteer
Replaces	Golden Eagle Passport National Park Pass National Park Pass w/ Golden Eagle Hologram	Golden Age Passport	Golden Access Passport	
Valid	12 months from purchase	Lifetime	Lifetime	12 months from issue
Eligibility	Anyone	Citizens or permanent US residents age 62 or older, obtained in person	Citizens or permanent US residents who have a permanent disability, regardless of age, obtained in person.	Anyone who volunteers 500 hours or more at Federal Recreation sites after 1 Jan 07
Benefits	Access to, and use of, Federal Recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees	Access to, and use of, Federal Recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees. Also provides 50% discount on some expanded amenity fees such as camping, boat launching, etc.	Access to, and use of, Federal Recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees. Also provides 50% discount on some expanded amenity fees such as camping, boat launching, etc	Access to, and use of, Federal Recreation sites that charge entrance or standard amenity fees
Cost	\$80	\$10	Free	Free

POINT LOOKOUT, overlooking the Park's entrance from an elevation of nearly 8,000 feet, is very resistant sandstone, visible as a band of white cliffs along the Park's North Rim and in the cap rock of the mesa and buttes surrounding Morefield Campground. When erosion wears away this protective layer of sandstone, the underlying soft shale will gully rapidly.



MANCOS VALLEY OVERLOOK, 2.7 miles (4 minutes) beyond the Park's entrance, provides an excellent view of Mancos town, founded in 1894 near the site where early Spanish explorers first crossed the Mancos River. The overlook also provides good views of Mancos Valley and the La Plata Range of the San Juan Mountains.



MOREFIELD CAMPGROUND, 4 miles (5 minutes) beyond the Park's entrance, is nestled just off the access road in a grove of Gambel oak trees.



Registration and details about the area are available at the camp store. Highlights include:

- **Camping loops:** 400 sites featuring tent, RV and group sites, each with picnic tables and barbeque grills, are operated by ARAMARK/Mesa Verde Company. The Navaho Loop, operated by Mesa Verde National Park, is reserved for employees, interns and volunteers and includes rental housing for spark staff.
- **Base camping:** visitors can rent tents, cots and other camping equipment.
- **Camp Store:** groceries, take-out food, firewood and other miscellaneous items.
- **Knife Edge Cafe.** Open 7:00 to 10:00 AM. Closes in early September.
- **Gas Station:** pay at pump, 24 hours.
- **Laundry and Showers:** coin operated, 24 hours.
- **Morefield Amphitheatre:** Each evening at 9:00 PM, between late May and early September, enjoy free 45-minute presentations by Rangers (weather permitting). Bring a flashlight
- **Prater Ridge Loop Trail:** 7.3 miles round-trip, if you hike both the northwest and southeast loops, begins at the west end of Morefield Campground.



The trail ascends the east side of Prater Ridge for 1.1 miles, loops around the top of the ridge and returns via the same 1.1 mile route. For a shorter hike, take only the northwest loop (5.6 miles) or southeast loop (4.4 miles). Changes in the landscape and views of the surrounding area are highlights of this trail.



- **Point Lookout Trail:** 2.2 miles round-trip, begins on the north side of the Morefield Campground Amphitheatre parking lot. The trail switch-backs up the back side of Point Lookout, crosses the mesa top and ends at the edge overlooking the Park's entrance. The mesa top provides unobstructed views of Morefield Canyon, the Montezuma and Mancos Valleys and the La Plata Range of the San Juan Mountains.



- **Knife Edge Trail:** 1.6 miles round-trip. The fairly flat, unpaved trail follows a portion of the old Knife Edge Road from the northwest corner of Morefield Campground towards the Montezuma Valley Overlook.



Built in 1914, Knife Edge Road served as the main access into the Park. Old timers still proudly talk about building, or “hanging,” the road on this steep bluff. Users recall the road with a bit of dread because of its narrowness, unexpected rock slides and slippery ruts. This trail provides good views of Montezuma Valley and the La Plata Range of the San Juan Mountains. It is an excellent place to watch the sunset and see wildlife.

In 1957, a tunnel between Morefield and Prater Canyons was built, eliminating the need for this precarious road.



MONTEZUMA VALLEY OVERLOOK, 6.9 miles (12 minutes) from the Park’s entrance, provides an excellent view of the broad Montezuma Valley. About 60 miles to the northwest, are the Abajo (Blue) Mountains. To the north, at a much greater distance, the La Sal (Salt) Mountains are visible on clear days. Both ranges are located in Utah. The overlook, where the old Knife Edge Road connects with the current access road, is an excellent place for sightseeing, watching the sunset and taking photographs.



PARK POINT OVERLOOK, 11.3 miles (18 minutes) beyond the Park's entrance. At 8,579 feet above sea level, the highest elevation on the Mesa, the point offers an unobstructed 360 degree panoramic view of the surrounding area. It is .2 miles from, and 32 feet above, the parking area. Depending on atmospheric conditions, which vary with the amount of manmade contamination, natural haze and time of year, the view in any direction is truly breathtaking. The area is a favorite for visitors who enjoy drawing, painting and photography. On a clear day, sites in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah are visible. To the north is Mount Wilson and Lone Cone, to the east the La Planta Range, to the south the Hogback, Shiprock and Lukachukai Mountains and to the west the Montezuma Valley and Sleeping Ute Mountains. In the distance to the northwest are the Abajo and Manti-LaSal mountains in Utah. The San Juan Mountains and the rugged canyon and mesa country from an outstanding backdrop for the large concentration of prehistoric Pueblo ruins located within Mesa Verde National Park.



In January 1906, when Congress deliberated the proposal to establish Mesa Verde National Park, its attention focused on the magnificent view from Park Point. In reference to the trail that at that time left the Mancos-Cortez highway, the 59th Congress stated, *“and from the highest hill over which the trail runs is one of the **grandest and most extensive views in the country.**”*

The Park Point tower is a fire lookout. It is manned during the critical fire season by National Park Service Rangers who look for fires, especially after thunderstorms. The fire check is done with binoculars and unaided eyes. Most fires are spotted as columns or puffs of smoke. When smoke is spotted, a sighting (azimuth) is taken with an Osborne Firefinder. After confirming the sighting with a Ranger in another tower in the park, both readings are called into the dispatcher and a triangulation is made on a map. Rangers describe the smoke (fire) by color, size, wind direction and fuels that may be burning. The Park then estimates the size of the fire and the manpower required for suppression.



GEOLOGIC OVERLOOK, 13.4 miles (23 minutes) from the Park's entrance. A fairly flat, paved, wheelchair accessible, walkway leads to two overlooks:



- The first, only a few yards from the road, provides information about the geology of Mesa Verde that produces seep springs, the source of fresh water the Ancestral Puebloans used.
- The second, about 210 yards from the road, provides information about the geology of Mesa Verde and the surrounding area. About 100 million years ago the entire central part of North America, from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico and from western Utah to Iowa, was covered by a shallow sea. Along the margins of this sea were swamps and lagoons which gave rise to the local coal beds. The valley floor is underlain by Dakota Sandstone, the first sandy deposit left by the shallow sea. The low gray hills and ridges

are remnants of the Mancos Formation, a 2000-foot thick layer of shale deposited on the Dakota Sandstone in the slowly advancing sea during a span of about 10 million years. Fossils in the shale and sandstone not only date these rocks but also provide an insight into the kinds of life that lived in this sea over 90 million years ago.

FAR VIEW AREA, encompasses three important visitor service facilities and the Far View Sites Complex.

- **Far View Visitor Center:** 15 miles (25 minutes) from the Park's entrance.



Open between April and October, visitors should stop here first to obtain information about the Park and purchase tickets if they want to enter the Cliff Palace, Balcony House and Long House cliff dwellings. Tickets are \$3.00 per person, per tour, no matter what age and serve to enhance the visitor experience by limiting the number of persons on each scheduled, Ranger-guided tour of these alcove sites. During periods of high visitations (such as the Labor Day weekend), visitors may be limited to one tour per day of either Cliff Palace or Balcony House.

- **Far View Lodge:** 15 miles (25 minutes) from the Park's entrance. The ARAMARK/Mesa Verde Company operation features 150 rooms, the award-winning Metate Room Restaurant, La Mano Lounge and a Gift Shop.



- **Far View Terrace:** 15 miles (25 minutes) from the Park's entrance. This ARAMARK/Mesa Verde Company operation includes buffet meals, Java City and a Gift Shop.



- **Half-day Guided Bus Tours:** National Park Service rangers lead visitors on a half-day learning journey and share current understanding and interpretations of the culture, architecture and archeology of the Ancient Puebloan people. Tours start with the earliest pit houses and include a tour of Cliff Palace. Enjoy a bus ride in comfort to sites and vantage points for spectacular photos. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit the Far View Visitor Center (ARAMARK desk), Far View Lode, Far View Terrace tour desk or Morefield Campground. Available early May through mid October. Tours depart daily from Far View Terrace at 8:00 AM and 1:00 PM.
- **Far View Sites Complex:** 1.5 miles (3 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center. Between AD 900 and about 1300, the most densely populated part of the mesa. Nearly 50 villages have been identified within a half square mile area, home to hundreds of people. A self-guided tour along a level 1-mile unpaved trail takes visitors to several major excavated sites highlighted below. Each evening at 5:00 PM, a free, ranger-led tour of this complex starts at Far View House adjacent to the parking area
 1. **Far View House:** An open pueblo with 40 rooms on the ground floor and an unknown number of rooms on the second story. Although few people probably lived here, its location and unusually large size suggests it may have served as a “public” building where leaders addressed the needs of the larger Far View community. Five kivas are located here, four within the walls of the house and one outside. The site offers a stunning view of the countryside, the La Plata Mountains, Shiprock and other Four Corners features. This expansive vista inspired the name for Far View House when it was excavated during the summer of 1916 by Dr. James Walter Fewkes.



2. **Pipe Shrine House:** Just beyond Far View house, this smaller pueblo is located so close it is speculated some sort of relationship existed between the two buildings. Twenty rooms are located on the first floor and the structure may have had a second floor. Enclosed in the courtyard is a fairly large kiva with one entryway. Pipe Shrine House was named for a dozen decorated clay pipes found on the floor of the kiva when it was excavated in 1922.
3. **Coyote Village:** When excavated in 1968 and 1969, 30 ground floor rooms, five kivas and a circular tower were discovered. Perhaps 40 or 50 people lived here in AD 1000, but others lived here as early as AD 800 or 900. Beneath the tower is a pithouse that belonged to earlier occupants. Several of the kivas are connected by tunnels, and beside one is a row of mealing bins where woman knelt and ground corn with manos and metates.
4. **Far View Reservoir (formerly known as Mummy Lake):** One of the most fascinating structures in the Park. Most believe it was a reservoir built to collect and store water for Far View Villagers. It is a circular depression, 90-feet in diameter and 12-feet deep, surrounded by a stone wall built in two phases, between AD 900 and 1000 and between AD 1100 and 1300. The south and east walls are backed by embankments and steps go up to a ramp that slopes into the depression. The catchments' area covers 25 acres. Ditches and intakes would have channeled snowmelt and rain water into the reservoir.



Early archeologists noted a shallow, linear depression running several miles toward the south, which suggested this water was shared with other sites. Several current archeologists, however, questions the concept of water sharing and evidences of such a ditch is now missing from the landscape. After serving as a water source for about 3 centuries, the reservoir fell into disuse. It may have clogged with sediment, or drought left it without water. In the 1200s, some residents who relied on the reservoir's water relocated to cliff dwellings, where springs and canyon bottom streams could meet their daily needs. Others however, remained near the reservoir until AD 1300.

5. **Megalithic House:** Two large stones “megaliths” were set on edge as part of the foundation of this house consisting of eight or nine rooms and a kiva. This is a classic “unit” pueblo – living and storage rooms and a pithouse/kiva in the courtyard. It became the basic blueprint repeated over and over again as pueblos grew larger.
6. **Far View Tower:** Excavation of a mound of fallen stones revealed a circular tower surrounded by low walled rooms at the base. In addition, three kivas were found along the south side of the tower along with 16 small, one-story rooms. The rooms used single-course masonry which indicates early construction. The tower is two-courses thick, a construction method used in later times. Nearly 60 round towers have been found at Mesa Verde and some are connected to kivas by tunnels. What function these towers served for the farming community of Far View is still unknown.



CHAPIN MESA, the most visited destination in the park, open year round and offering cliff dwellings, hiking, auto touring and interpretations of Ancestral Puebloans. Highlights include:

- **Farming Terrace Loop Trail**, this half mile, moderately strenuous trail (145 foot elevation change) winds along a series of farming terraces built by the Ancestral Puebloans. Using check dams to collect moisture and soil, the terraces took advantage of natural drainage to augment crop yields from dryland farming.



- **Cedar Tree Tower:** 4.9 miles (8 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center; self guided tour of Ancestral Puebloan tower and kiva complex located adjacent to the road.



Towers are scattered across Mesa Verde. Why they were built? Archeologists speculate they may have been observation locations or ceremonial sites since some are connected to kivas by tunnels. Perhaps some, including this one, provided a lofty location for viewing the mesa and canyon or significant social events.

- **Mesa Top Loop:** 5.6 miles (10 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center; a 6-mile driving tour with stops at twelve easily-accessible sites of surface dwellings and cliff dwelling overlooks which reveal the full range of architecture at Mesa Verde, from the earliest pithouses to the latest cliff dwellings. Visitors see a progression of the homes and religious structures of the Ancestral Puebloans, who lived here for more than 600 years, from around AD 600 to about 1300. The excavated sites and a number of cliff dwellings are visible. Parking areas exist on both sides of this mostly one-way route, with sites beside the road or within a short walk. Highlights include: Pithouse AD 600, Navajo Canyon View, Square Tower House Overlook, Pithouses and Early Pueblo Villages AD 700 to 950, Mesa Top Sites AD 900 to 1100, Sun Point Pueblo AD 1200, Sun Point View, Oak Tree House, Fire Temple and New fire House, Sun Temple and views of Cliff Palace from both the Sun Point and Sun Temple stops.
- **Picnic Area:** 5.4 miles (9 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center
- **Historic District Walking Tour:** 6 miles (15 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center. A short, flat, self-guided tour of several buildings built in this area between 1916 and 1942 which illustrate new and old approaches to create national parks and preserve past cultures. While visitor services and employee amenities were normal park concerns, creating a park infrastructure that reflected a pre-existing cultural and natural landscape was a novel concept. In 1921, Mesa Verde Superintendent Jesse Nusbaum relocated park Headquarters from Mancos to the mesa top. Most of the buildings he designed reflect the modified Pueblo Revival Style, which mirror natural landscape and Ancestral Puebloan themes. It was the innovation and labor supplied by young men and women working for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and other New Deal programs (1933-42), however, that perfected construction techniques that completed Nusbaum's dream. Highlights of the tour include:
 1. **Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum:** Built from 1922 to 1925 of Cliffhouse Formation sandstone, the same rock used by Ancestral Puebloans to build their dwellings. Open year round, the museum provides information and features exhibits, dioramas and a 25-minute video every half hour which trace development of the Ancestral Puebloans and a well-stocked bookstore.

2. **Chief Ranger's Office:** Built in 1927 for \$2,500, the structure served as a Community Building, Post Office, Administrative Building and Natural History Museum. In 1970, it assumed its present role of Chief Ranger's Office. The building's location provides an excellent view of Spruce Tree House from its back porch.
 3. **Superintendent's Home:** The first building designed and constructed by park Superintendent Nusbaum. Built in 1921, the building remains the home of the park's superintendent.
 4. **Park Headquarters:** Built in 1922 as an Administration Building, the building now houses Mesa Verde's administrative offices.
 5. **U.S. Post Office:** Built in 1922 as a modern "Comfort Station" to replace the nearby outhouses, the building was converted into Post Office in 1936. It is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.
 6. **Chapin Amphitheatre:** Built in 1933 to provide lecturers with a site that afforded magnificent views of Spruce Canyon and seating for an audience of up to 400 people. Today, Native American dances are held here.
 7. **Fewkes Cabin:** Originally built in 1916 where the Chief Ranger's Office now stands, as a ranger station, the cabin was converted into a museum with cabinets displaying archeological materials, the first such museum in any national park. In 1927, the cabin was painstakingly dismantled and reassembled in its present location near the picnic area. Since then it has served as a Community Center, Fire Management Office and today, an Education Center.
 8. **Research Library:** Constructed in 1925 as an exclusive dormitory for single, white male ranger (single women could not become rangers until the 1960s), the dormitory was converted into a Research Library in 1986. It is a repository for books and artifacts on Mesa Verde and the Southwest and houses a rare book collection and is open to the public only by appointment.
 9. **Spruce Tree Terrace Restaurant:** Built in 1926 as the Aileen Nusbaum Hospital, with six beds, a doctor's office, an operating room and a small kitchen, the hospital was converted in 1963 into a snack bar, gift shop and small grocery store. The concession is operated by ARAMARK/Mesa Verde Company.
- **Spruce Tree House:** 6 miles (15 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center. The third largest and best preserved cliff dwelling among several hundred within the Parks boundaries contains about 114 rooms and eight kivas. It is built into a natural cave measuring 216-feet at its greatest width and 89-feet at its greatest depth. It is thought the dwelling housed about 100 people. The dwelling was discovered in 1886 when two local ranchers chanced upon it while searching for stray cattle. It is said they entered the ruin by climbing down a large Douglas Spruce tree growing from the front of the dwelling to the mesa top. Thus the name – Spruce Tree House. The tree was cut down by another early explorer. Self-guided tours can be made to the site between spring and fall and Rangers are on site to answer questions. The winding, paved, ½ mile, round-trip trail with a 100–

foot change in elevation begins below the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. Ranger-guided tours are available during the winter, weather and trail conditions permitting.



- ***Spruce Canyon Trail:*** 6 miles (15 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center; 2.4-mile loop trail introduces hikers to the natural environment of Mesa Verde National Park. Trail begins below the paved Spruce Tree House Trail, drops 560 feet via switchbacks, turns up Spruce Canyon for about one mile, slants 560 feet up to the mesa top and returns to the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum via the picnic area. Access to the trail is only available when Spruce Tree House is open.



- ***Petroglyph Point Trail:*** 6 miles (15 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center. A 2.4 mile, unpaved loop trail leads hikers to a panel of Ancestral Puebloan petroglyphs and introduces them to the beautiful natural environment of Mesa Verde National Park. The trail head is located below the paved Spruce Tree House trail and continues along the edge of Spruce Tree and Spruce Canyons.



It meanders along ledges and through alcoves to an impressive Petroglyph panel. Native American Rock Art, found in nearly all states, is divided into two main categories: petroglyphs, made by pecking, scratching, carving or drilling with a sharp stone on rocks or cliffs; and, pictographs, made by painting rocks or cliffs with minerals or dyes. The designs and figures are a way to share ideas, information and history. They may have a simple or complicated religious meaning.



After the Petroglyph panel, the trail evolves into 100 stone steps that lead to the top of the mesa and an easy return along the mesa rim to the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. The trail, which provides excellent views of Spruce Tree, Spruce and Navajo Canyons, is only accessible when Spruce Tree House is open.

- **Visitor Amenities:** 6 miles (15 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center; Restrooms, Spruce Tree Terrace Restaurant and Gift Shop, Post Office and picnic area.
- **Cliff Palace Loop Road:** 9 miles (20 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center; a 6-mile road providing cliff dwelling overlooks, access to Cliff Palace, Balcony House and the Soda Canyon Overlook Trail.

- **Cliff Palace:** 9.3 miles (22 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center. The largest cliff dwelling in North America, an archeological masterpiece by any standard, Mesa Verde's "crown jewel" is visible from the Cliff Palace overlook.



Access, however, is limited to holders of tickets for one-hour Ranger-guided tours led each year between late May and mid-November. Tours begin at the overlook. Visitors descend uneven stone steps and climb five 8 to 10-foot ladders for a 100-foot elevation change. Total round-trip distance is about a ¼ mile. Each evening between May and November intimate tours of no more than 20 participants explore the site at 7:00 PM as the sun begins to set. These 1.5-hour tours are led by a Ranger or from the viewpoint of a character from Mesa Verde's past. Tickets are \$10 per person and available only at the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum Bookstore.

- **Balcony House:** 13.9 miles (37 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center. One of the best preserved and most unique cliff dwellings in the Park, this site provides the most physically challenging tour. Visitors access the site by climbing a 32-foot ladder and exit by crawling through a four-foot high, 12-foot long tunnel and climbing up a 60-foot open rock face with two 10-foot ladders. This smaller cliff dwelling is not visible from the road or an overlook and access is limited to holders of tickets for the one-hour Ranger guided tours which begin at the Balcony House parking area. Tours are only available between late May and mid October.



- **Soda Canyon Overlook Trail:** 14.6 miles (38 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center; easy 1.2 mile round trip to the canyon edge for a view of Balcony House and sites along Soda Canyon.
- **Check Dams/Farming Terraces:** To gain more soil and water, the people of Mesa Verde built many small dams across natural drainages. They laid rough stones perpendicular across these drainages in a series, creating a terraced effect. These dams slowed water runoff from the mesa tops and captured pockets of soil that could then be planted. More than 900 check dams have been counted on Chapin Mesa alone, providing 20 or 30 acres of good farmland.

WETHERILL MESA, the less congested destination in the park, is only open between Memorial Day and Labor Day of each year. Vehicle length on the road to the mesa is limited to 25 feet. The mesa offers cliff dwellings, hiking, tram touring and interpretations of Ancestral Puebloans. Highlights include:

- **Long House:** 13.6 miles (30 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center. The second largest cliff dwelling in Mesa Verde contains some 150 rooms, 21 kivas and an unusually large central plaza. So named because of its long overhang, the dwelling's intricate network of living rooms could accommodate between 150 and 175 people. Although its construction is characteristic of the hundreds of cliff dwellings throughout Mesa Verde, Long House is much larger than the more typical 10 to 15 room units. In some sections, the shaped sandstone block walls Ancestral Puebloans built here were three stories high. In ledges above the main part of this pueblo are remnants of storage rooms, once easily reached by ladders from the roof of lower rooms. The inhabitants of Long House were fortunate to have an extensive seep spring directly in back of the alcove. The site is only open to the public between May and September. Tours begin at the Wetherill Mesa information kiosk. A tram takes visitor to and from the trailhead and the Park's most in-depth tour; 90-minutes involving a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile round-trip hike, two 15-foot ladders in the site and a 130-foot change in elevation entering and exiting the site.



- **Step House:** 13.6 miles (30 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center. A unique site because the ruins of two separate occupations can be seen here as well as petroglyphs.

A Modified Basketmaker site (approximately AD 626) is situated between the old stone steps on the left (that gave Step House its name) and the large boulders on the right. The rest of the alcove is occupied by a masonry pueblo dating to classic Pueblo times (AD 1226). 100-foot elevation descent and ascent along a ¾ mile round trip paved and winding path beginning near Wetherill Mesa information kiosk.



- **Nordenskiold #16 Trail:** 13.6 miles (30 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center; moderate, 1-mile round trip, gravel path through burned area of the mesa, gently climbs to the Nordenskiold #16 cliff dwelling overlook.
- **Badger House Community Trail:** 13.6 miles (30 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center. The 2.5 mile round trip trail is accessible to the handicapped. It is a combination of gravel and paving, leads to four mesa top sites and begins at the Wetherill Mesa information kiosk. Riding the tram (see last bullet) reduces the walking distance by 1 mile. This group of ruins covers nearly seven acres, features four sites and exposes visitors to 600 years of prehistory.
 1. **Modified Basketmaker Pithouse:** (AD 650) After settling on various parts Mesa Verde, the people lived in pithouses (semi-subterranean homes) clustered in villages. These also included groups of small above-ground storage rooms built of mud plastered posts.
 2. **Developmental Pueblo Village:** About AD 750, Ancestral Puebloan living arrangements changed rapidly. The storage rooms built near the pithouse grew into room of three apartments. They probably used them as summer homes, and then retreated into the better insulated pithouses with the coming of cold weather.
 3. **Badger House:** This site was first occupied between AD 900 and 1000. Ancestral Puebloans returned in the 1200s, built the kiva and tower and a room-block, but soon after abandoned the site for good. More towers have been found in the Mesa Verde-Montezuma Valley area than in any other part of the Southwest. Most were located near kivas and many were connected to kivas by tunnels. This suggests towers were important in Ancestral Puebloan ceremonial life, but archeologists are not sure how.

4. ***Two Raven House:*** This site was occupied at various times between the AD 900 and 1100. The Ancestral Puebloans left some unusual and puzzling architectural features here.
- ***Tram Service:*** 13.6 miles (30 minutes) from Far View Visitor Center; Long House ticket holders are seated first; others on a space-available basis; travels to Two Raven House, Kodak House Overlook, Long House Overlook and returns to Wetherill Mesa information kiosk.

VISITOR OPTIONS:

1. *With only four hours to visit the Park:*

- Drive to Far View Visitor Center for information and orientation
- Drive to and visit Chapin Mesa Museum and then take a self-guided tour of Spruce Tree House;
- Drive to and take the 6-mile Mesa Top Loop Road and visit mesa top sites along the loop.

2. *With one day to the visit the Park:*

- Drive to Far View Visitor Center for information and orientation about Chapin Mesa.
- Purchase tickets for the 60-minute ranger-guided tours of Cliff Palace and/or Balcony House.
- Take the tour(s) you purchased tickets for.
- Take the Cliff Palace Loop Road (if you plan to visit Cliff Palace or Balcony House tickets are required. They can only be purchased at the Far View Visitor Center).
- Visit Chapin Mesa Museum, take self-guided tour of Spruce Tree House, drive the 6-mile Mesa top Loop Road and visit sites along the loop.
- Visit the Far View Sites Complex.

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- Drive to Far View Visitor Center for information and orientation about Wetherill Mesa.
- Purchase tickets for the 90-minute Ranger-guided tour of Long House.
- Drive to Wetherill Mesa along the scenic 12-mile road.
- Take the 90-minute Ranger-guided tour of Long House.

- Take the tram tour to cliff dwelling overlooks (if you plan to visit Long House tickets are required. They can only be purchased at Far View Visitor Center).
- Take the self guided tour of Step House and hiking trails to sites on Wetherill Mesa

3. *With two or more days to visit the Park:*

- Drive to Far View Visitor Center for information and orientation about Chapin Mesa and Wetherill Mesa.
- Plan to spend a full day on each mesa.
- Purchase tickets for ranger-guided tours of Cliff Palace and Balcony House on Chapin Mesa for one day and Long House on Wetherill Mesa for the other.
- Take the ranger-guided tours you purchased tickets for.
- Visit as many of the sites on each mesa as possible.
- Take one or more of Mesa Verde's hiking trails

APPENDIX II - Southwestern Phase Sequences

TIME SCALE	PECOS CLASSIFICATION	MESA VERDE	CHACO CANYON	RIO GRANDE VALLEY	MIMBRES	CASAS GRANDES	PHOENIX BASIN		
1800-	Pueblo V			Historic					
1700-									
1600-	Pueblo IV			Classic				Cliff	Robles
1500-									Diablo
1400-				Paquimé					
1300-	Pueblo III	Mesa Verde	Mesa Verde	Coalition	Black Mountain	Buena Fé	Classic		
1200-			Abandonmen †			Perros Bravos			
1100-	McElmo	Late Bonito	Developmental	Classic Mimbres	Pilon		Colonial		
1000-	Pueblo II	Mancos		Classic					
900-		Ackman		Bonito					
800-	Pueblo I	Piedra	Early Bonito	Late Pithouse	Convento	Pioneer			
700-			Pueblo I						
600-	Basketmaker III	La Plata	Basketmaker III	Early Pithouse		?			
500-									
400-	Basketmaker II			Preceramic					
300-									
200-									
100-			Basketmaker II						
AD 1									

APPENDIX III

Plants and Animals of Mesa Verde

(Taken from Mesa Verde Seasonal Ranger's Handbook)

TREES AND SHRUBS:

cliff fendlerbush
Douglas Fir
Gambel Oak
Mormon tea
mountain mahogany
pinyon pine
ponderosa pine
rabbitbrush
Utah juniper
Utah serviceberry
yucca
big sagebrush
skunkbush sumac
snowberry

MAMMALS:

shrew: masked, merriam,
dwarf, gray
myotis: California, long-eared,
little brown, long-legged,
fringed, yuma
bat: silver haired, hoary, big
brown, spotted, western
big-eared, pallid, Mexican
freetail
western pipistrel
cottontail: desert, mountain
blacktail jackrabbit
chipmunk: least, Colorado
yellow-bellied marmot
squirrel: golden mantled,
whitetail antelope, tassel-
eared, red, rock
whitetail prairie dog
valley pocket gopher

mouse: plains pocket, silky
silky western harvest,

FLOWERS:

purple aster
showy evening promise
globemallow
Indian paintbrush
larkspur
spurred lupine
Mariposa lily
pricklypear cactus
scarlet gilia
scarlet penstemon

BIRDS:

black-billed magpie
wren: canyon, house
common bushtit
common raven
mountain chickadee
pinyon jay
plain titmouse
red-tailed hawk
scrub jay
Steller's jay
turkey vulture
white-breasted nuthatch
white-throated swift
golden eagle
sharp-shinned hawk
American kestrel
mourning dove
owl: great horned, northern saw-whet
western tanager

common poor will
black-chinned hummingbird

brushcanyon, deer,
pinyon northern
grasshopper, house
beaver
woodrat: whitethroat, bushyrail,
Mexican
vole: longtail, Mexican,
mountain
muskrat
porcupine
coyote
red fox
gray fox
black bear
ringtail cat
raccoon
longtail weasel
badger
striped skunk
mountain lion
mule deer
bobcat

REPTILES:

pygmy rattlesnake
bullsnake
yellow-bellied racer
collared lizard
northern plateau lizard
sagebrush lizard
short-horned lizard
six-lined racerunner

broad-tailed hummingbird
Brewer's blackbird
northern flicker
hairy woodpecker
ash-throated flycatcher
violet-green swallow
finch: rosy, Cassin's, house
blue-gray gnatcatcher
mountain bluebird
Townsend's solitaire
American robin
solitary vireo
Warbler: Virginias, yellow-rumped
gray-headed junco
black-throated gray warbler
black-headed grosbeak
green-tailed towhee
rufous-sided towhee
sparrow: savannah, chipping
pine siskin

APPENDIX IV

Geology Of Mesa Verde

(Modified from Mesa Verde Seasonal Ranger's Handbook)

The sequence of rocks exposed on the mesa originated in a great inland sea that began to cover this area about 100 million years ago. As the water encroached over an old, low, relatively flat erosion surface, streams from the west brought sands and mud into the shallow water. These shoreline deposits consisted of beach sands, shallow water cross-bedded shore sands, lagoonal and swamp mud, and deltaic sands at the mouths of inflowing streams. These deposits are now the brown Dakota Sandstone seen in the Cortez Valley below Mesa Verde. This particular layer is not exposed within the boundaries of Mesa Verde National Park.

The sea continued to advance until the Mesa Verde region was far out from the shoreline that was probably close to what is now the western edge of Utah, some 200 miles away. The sediments deposited change from the coarser, near shore, sandy deposits to fine, evenly-bedded shales. In all, about 2,000 feet of Mancos Formations were deposited in quiet offshore conditions and are now exposed in the steep, dark gray shale slopes of the north escarpment. Although the Mancos Shale appears to be a great, shaly mass, it is not one homogeneous unit. The sediments were deposited over a 10-million year period and consist primarily of shales with some limestone. It took over 10 million years to deposit the 2,000 feet that make up the Mancos Formation. Variations in environment over time are well documented in rock types and in an abundant and varied fossil record.

The sea reached its greatest extent during the middle Mancos time and then began a slow withdrawal. Sand was brought into the sea as the water became shallower, and the shales became progressively sandier. The massive shallow water Point Lookout Sandstone overlying and

grading into the Mancos Formation was named for the prominent Point Lookout overlooking the flat plain. Few fossils remain in this formation because the sediments were deposited in a zone of vigorous wave and current action.

The sea continued to withdraw to the northeast; and, a broad, low coastal plain emerged. Woody shales, coals, and coarse irregular sands were deposited in broad, shallow swamps and along stream and interstream areas and became the sediments of the Menefee formation. Many plant fossils are evidence of lush vegetation and show that the climate was wet and warm during this period when the land was only slightly above the sea.

The sea again lapped farther south. Beach sands and shallow water sands were deposited, now forming the Cliff House formation capping the mesa. This formation takes its name from the presence of the famous cliff dwellings in the alcoves and niches weathered in these sandstones. The alcoves were formed by the action of ground water percolating through porous sandstone until it reached an impervious layer and then moves along this water barrier to the canyon edge. Freezing, thawing, chemical, mechanical, and wind erosion all continue to enlarge the niches along the canyon walls. The Cliff House formation contains many invertebrate and vertebrate fossils. Most of the vertebrate remains are broken due to wave action at the time of deposition. The fossils near the top of the formation have been dated at approximately 87.5 million years old.

Uplift of the area at the end of the Cretaceous Period drained the sea and initiated a long period of erosion, which gave rise to the present topography. Laccolithic igneous intrusions gave rise to the La Plata Mountains to the north and the Ute Mountains to the west. Much of the flat mesa surface and the Cortez Valley are covered with varying depths of red wind blown soil (loess) that has been accumulating for one million years.