



Chimney Rock National Monument

U.S. Forest Service



Chimney Rock is one of the most recognized archaeoastronomical resources in North America. Every 18 years, the pueblo is perfectly positioned to frame the rising moon between Chimney Rock's twin spires, drawing worldwide visitors.

Facts

- Part of the San Juan National Forest, the impressive site truly is an architectural wonder. Chimney Rock was home to the ancestors of the modern Pueblo Indians about 1,000 years ago. They built more than 200 homes and ceremonial buildings high above the valley floor.
- The Great House Pueblo, a dramatic structure, likely was used as an observatory for the annual summer solstice.
- The Presidential designation provides the opportunity to tell the story of the Ancestral Pueblo people and pay homage to Chaco Canyon civilization ancestors.
- The site will be managed by the U.S. Forest Service in partnership with the nonprofit Chimney Rock Interpretive Association Inc.
- A management plan for the monument will be developed to provide for the protection and interpretation of scientific and historic objects in the monument and for continued public access.

Background and Significance

- In southwest Colorado, Chimney Rock incorporates spiritual, historic, and scientific resources of great value and significance.
- The site is surrounded by the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.
- In 1970, 4,100 acres of the site earned designation as an Archaeological Area and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Designation of Chimney Rock as a national monument garnered widespread, bi-partisan support, including thee public and tribal, business, tourism, conservation, academic, cultural preservation communities, and the Colorado congressional delegation.



An Eagle dance is performed during an event at Chimney Rock. *Photo by Terry Sloan/Southwest Native Cultures*

Other U.S. Forest Service-managed monuments:

- Admiralty Island National Monument, Alaska
- Misty Fiords National Monument, Alaska
- Mount St. Helens National Monument, Washington
- Newberry National Volcanic Monument, Oregon
- Giant Sequoia National Monument, California
- Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, California



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Recreation and Education

- Chimney Rock is an active archeological site that focuses on preservation and protection, including site stabilization on this nonrenewable cultural resource.
- Today, descendants of the Ancestral Pueblo People return to this important place of cultural continuity to visit their ancestors and for spiritual and traditional purposes.
- Visitors are offered opportunities to learn about Chimney Rock's historical past and current cultural importance. Guided and self-guided tours highlight the richness of Chimney Rock's geology and cultural significance.
- Annual visitation was 12,000 people prior to designation. As a national monument, that number is expected to significantly increase.
- Chimney Rock Interpretive Association hosts special events, including pottery workshops, night sky archaeoastronomy programs, and Native American cultural gatherings.
- The monument is home to unique vegetative communities. For example, several desert species generally found farther to the south are located on or near some of the archeological sites. A species of cholla cactus, not naturally found outside of the Sonoran Desert, is thought to be associated with deliberate cultivation practices of the Ancestral Pueblo culture.



Source: BBC Consulting

Chimney Rock National Monument covers 4,726 acres between Pagosa Springs and Durango in southwestern Colorado.



A national monument designation at Chimney Rock will enhance the protection, resources and recognition accorded to such national treasures.