



FIELDREPORT

Southwest Region | Fall 2014



150th Anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre

One hundred and fifty years ago, in the quiet morning hours of November 29, 1864, a United States Army force led by Colonel John M. Chivington attacked a Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indian encampment along Big Sandy Creek, on the rolling prairie of present-day southeastern Colorado.

It was a contentious time on the American frontier. Just three years earlier, as the U.S. military presence in the region grew during the Civil War, six Plains Indian chiefs had ceded significant territory to the federal government and continued to negotiate for peace. But Plains tribes were divided about whether to engage with the U.S. federal and territorial governments. Some opponents of engagement regularly raided encroaching white settlements and were perceived as a serious barrier to American expansionist programs. The camp at Big Sandy Creek, however, had been authorized by officials at nearby Fort Lyons and prominently displayed an American flag to signal its position. Nevertheless, in what was later condemned by a Congressional investigation to be murder “in cold blood,” an estimated 163 Indians were killed in the eight-hour incursion at Big Sandy Creek. Most of the victims were women and children, as many of the camp’s warriors were out hunting bison on the plains.

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History and Justice in the Southwest

America’s Southwest is a place of extraordinary beauty and complex history. It is a land of extremes from the highest peaks in the Rocky Mountains to the searing Sonoran desert on our Mexican borderlands. And the National Park Service manages and protects these remarkable and iconic landscapes, while also honoring and preserving the rich history of indigenous peoples and cultures in the Southwest.

At the National Parks Conservation Association, our work also strives to honor the First People and their customs, culture, and spiritual connection to the landscape. We attempt to reduce the impacts of climate change, coal-fired power plants, and oil and gas development on our national parks and adjacent tribal lands while respecting the region’s complicated history, tribal economies, and the need to right environmental injustices.

Some national parks document Native Americans’ early struggles to survive. The sacred and cultural sites of Ancestral Puebloans at Mesa Verde National Park and Chaco Culture National Historical Park or lesser-known parks such as Hovenweep, Aztec Ruins, or Walnut Canyon, help hundreds of thousands of visitors each year learn about the culture, customs, and challenges of a people who adapted to and thrived in the harsh landscape of the Colorado Plateau. Archeologists and park service personnel are able to examine this

culture, whose artifacts have been preserved by the region’s dry climate. It is very clear that among the factors that caused these people to abandon this region was a changing climate (drought) and a shortage of food and fuel.

Sometimes dire economic circumstances for those living on reservations create conditions that can lead to exploitation, and tribal leaders make choices that have environmental impacts on the parks.

Other national park units tell the stories of Native Americans’ encounters with settlers and cavalries in the Southwest. These sites preserve and interpret a history of great triumph and heroism as well as inhumanity and tragedy. In this issue, we tell the story of the Sand Creek Massacre, where 150 years ago 163 members of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe tribes were murdered by a U.S. Army force. The park at this site helps us all to better understand the evolving American story.

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Top: Navajo cowboy overlooking Monument Valley Tribal Park, UT/AZ. ©YinYang | iStock photo

FIELD REPORT

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Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico & Utah

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Colorado Program Manager, Vanessa Mazal

MEET OUR NEW STAFF

Vanessa came to NPCA from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, where she managed communications and public engagement grants on international

development and health issues for seven years. Prior to that, she produced independent research on collaborative watershed management for the US EPA and Washington State Department of Ecology, and worked on her dissertation focused on governance issues in the Upper Rio Grande basin. She spent several years consulting for the Trust for Public Land, where she helped launch a working lands conservation program, and worked for Conservation Strategies, a political consulting firm in the Pacific Northwest. She completed her MA from the University of Washington in Environmental Anthropology in 2005.

Vanessa returned to her home state of Colorado from Seattle to manage NPCA's Colorado field office. She lives in Boulder with her husband, Clark, and their two young kids, Dollie and Beau.

The Colorado Field office will provide direct support to Colorado park units and will



help to build NPCA's Colorado constituency and supporters. Vanessa will also contribute to NPCA's national and regional teams working on landscape-level issues affecting Colorado parks, including promoting park interests in BLM Master Leasing Plans (MLPs) for oil and gas development near parks, and in efforts to protect the Colorado River system, which flows through nine national park units. Vanessa will also represent NPCA in interactions with regional federal agency offices based in Denver. For more information, feel free to reach out to Vanessa via email at vmazal@npca.org.

Favorite Photos from Our Members

Do you have a particularly special photo from your past visit to a Southwest Park? Please send it to ekirsch@npca.org and we might include it in our next Field Report. Also, send along a caption with any photo credits. 300 dpi resolution or better please! Thank you for sharing your park adventures!



Top Right: Horn Sheep at Rocky Mountain National Park ©Angela Buchanan **Bottom Row:** Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument ©Terry Hardie

Discovering the Marvels of Canyon de Chelly

Visit the phenomenally scenic Canyon de Chelly National Monument and you can get a sense of what it means to be native to this special place.

Located on Navajo land in northwestern Arizona, the 83,840-acre monument is composed of three long canyons carved by streams flowing from the Chuska Mountains. Great red sandstone walls flank canyons continuously occupied for nearly 20 centuries.

Congress designated the monument in 1931 because of its concentration of prehistoric cliff dwellings and rock art. Unique in the park system, the land belongs to the Navajo. Forty families live in Canyon de Chelly. For the Navajo, this is the spiritual heart of their

homeland. The 750-foot distinctive Spider Rock, for instance, is the home of Spider Woman, an important figure in the mythology, oral traditions and folklore of many Native American cultures. Although accounts vary, according to mythology she was responsible for the stars in the sky; she took a web she had spun, laced it with dew, threw it into the sky and the dew became the stars.

In this historic landscape, a last stand against Col. Kit Carsen and his troops failed dramatically. Also, the Navajo Long Walk, in which the U.S. Army forcibly sent 8,000 Navajo to New Mexico for four years, began and ended here. The deep details of these stories and many others are best learned from the people themselves—from a Navajo

park ranger or a Navajo guide, who can take visitors to remote parts of the monument on foot, by jeep, or on horseback.

As recently as 2009, some Navajo have urged the removal the Park Service in favor of Navajo management, a move motivated in part by a belief that self-management by the tribe would generate more income for members. Most Navajo appreciate the agency's cultural sensitivity and consider it a good partner and as a result, these proposals have not progressed beyond the Chapter level.

Below: Canyon de Chelly National Monument in the Navajo Indian Reservation, AZ. ©Spargo | Dreamstime.com



“In any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing and the worst thing you can do is nothing.”

— THEODORE ROOSEVELT, 26TH US PRESIDENT

Vote to Protect Our National Parks



Election Day is right around the corner and the national parks in the southwest region need you! The people you elect on Tuesday, November 4, will cast many votes—some that will impact America's national parks. They will face critical decisions such as how to provide energy for our growing nation, how much to invest in our federal, state, and local programs, how to address the deteriorating roads in and around national parks, and how best to protect our natural resources for future generations. When they vote on these critical issues and more, will they consider the impacts on national parks, the communities that surround the parks, and the people who visit them?

As the National Park System gears up to celebrate 100 years of conserving nature, history, and culture, make sure your political leaders help prepare the parks for the next 100 years. It's up to you to ensure our elected officials support strong policies to protect our national parks.

Remember, our democracy is only strong when we all participate. So, get out to the polls and vote on November 4.

History and Justice in the Southwest

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Some parks offer unique economic development opportunities to southwestern tribes. One such unit, Canyon de Chelly, located within the Navajo Nation at Chinle in Arizona, allows visitors to tour extraordinary landscapes and ruins with Navajo guides while gaining a rich understanding of the tragic Navajo Long Walk. Despite a long partnership between the tribe and the National Park Service, the economic challenges on the reservation have occasionally sparked efforts by the local Navajo chapter to petition their tribal leadership to assume full management of the park. Although this has not progressed to a formal petition by the Tribal Council to the US government, it does underscore the element of economic aspiration inherent in this relationship.

At the National Parks Conservation Association, our work also strives to honor the First People and their customs, culture, and spiritual connection to the landscape.

Sometimes dire economic circumstances for those living on reservations create conditions that can lead to exploitation, and tribal leaders make choices that have environmental impacts on the parks. Uranium mining in the 1950's and 1960's contaminated reservation land, and the development of massive coal-fired power plants upwind of tribal homes has led to severe air pollution. A proposed development on remote Navajo land at the confluence of the Colorado River and Little Colorado River in the heart of the Grand Canyon—considered one of the most sacred sites by many tribes—has been enabled by deprivation. The development would include gondolas descending from the rim to the river and a resort hotel. The decision to pursue this development is in the hands of tribal leaders and members, but NPCA views the proposal as a Faustian bargain—some economic gain in return for destruction and wanton desecration of the great spiritual connection our First Nation has to the Southwest. These current conflicts highlight a long history of environmental and economic injustice. Our national parks in the Southwest trace that history and today, are ground zero for these conflicts and difficult choices.

150th Anniversary of the Sand Creek Massacre



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Colorado Territory militiamen reportedly lingered for two days after the initial attack subsided, terrorizing survivors, pilfering the camp, and desecrating the remains of the dead. Scalps and other trophy body parts were subsequently paraded through the streets and popular gathering spots of Denver, 180 miles to the north. In its aftermath, the Sand Creek Massacre disrupted the social and political fabric of the Plains tribes, fueled mistrust in the federal government, and ultimately helped pave the way for continued American westward expansion. In 2007, the location of the massacre was preserved as a National Historic Site by the National Park Service. The irony of the site being managed by the same government whose representatives committed the atrocity a century and a half ago is not lost on Sand Creek Superintendent, Alexa Roberts.

“A visit to Sand Creek is a visceral, emotional experience and one that necessitates self-examination,” Roberts says. “The events that occurred here are part and parcel of the landscape.”

Today, Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site pays respect to the lives lost, honors the significance of the event, and

elicits quietude and reflection. It is managed in close collaboration with representatives of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, Kiowa County, and the state of Colorado. The visitor path overlooks the encampment site and the cottonwood corridor along the creek that survivors fled through in search of safety. Sand Creek is already a draw for historians and archaeologists from around the world due to its historical significance. The park service has plans to moderately expand its facilities and to establish a primary source research and educational facility on site.

This year, the 150th Anniversary of the tragedy will be commemorated by the 16th annual Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run from Sand Creek to Denver, and by events throughout the fall in the metropolitan Denver area. For more information, visit the National Park Service's Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site website at www.nps.gov/sand/ or the Sand Creek Massacre Commemoration Commission's 150th Anniversary website: <http://sandcreekmassacre150.com>.

Above: The historic painting of Sand Creek Massacre along Big Sandy Creek, CO, by Robert Lindneaux.

Protecting Chaco Canyon Culture

For more than 2,000 years, ancestral Puebloan or Chacoan people spread out over the Four Corners Region of the Southwestern United States. As their culture and society progressed, so did their elaborate complex of communities and carefully constructed road networks linking them together. The hub of the Chacoan Culture between 850 and 1250 AD was northwestern New Mexico's Chaco Canyon, where sophisticatedly engineered ceremonial and public buildings, along with multi-story stone buildings called Great Houses, provided a central place for ceremonies, trade, and administrative activities to at least 150 satellite communities. Evidence of astronomical alignments, geometry and landscaping further illustrate the incredible architectural skill of these ancient people and a level of planning to rival modern day urban planning. However, by 1200 AD most Puebloan people migrated from the Chaco area and the region was essentially abandoned until the Navajo settled there in the 17th Century. In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt added Chaco Canyon to the National Park System as a National Monument. In 1980 it was re-designated Chaco Culture National Historical Park followed by its inclusion, with Aztec Ruins National Monument and several BLM managed outlier sites, as the Chaco Culture World Heritage Site in 1987.

Today, the Puebloan people of New Mexico, the Hopi, and the Navajo all consider Chaco Canyon an important part of their history and traditions. Unlike the bustling hub of trade and Chacoan society existing nearly a thousand years ago, however, the region is now exploding with interest from oil and gas companies on both public and Navajo Nation land, which encompasses much of the area adjacent to Chaco Culture National Historical Park. Much of the landscape of northwestern New Mexico is already producing oil and gas and there is pressure for more. As horizontal drilling technology has opened up new interest in resource extraction, efforts to adequately protect the remaining cultural resources and spiritual significance of the Greater Chaco landscape are now more important than ever.

It's a complex situation. With industry applying for leases on both federal and Navajo land, there is no comprehensive planning process to address the protection of the Greater Chaco area. Earlier this year the BLM began planning a process for

more oil and gas development on lands they manage within an already heavily developed portion of northwestern New Mexico. NPCA and our partners are working to ensure that the cultural and natural resources of Chaco Culture National Historical Park and the larger World Heritage site are appropriately considered in the planning process. Input from the native people with strong ties to the Chaco area will also be critical. All of the groups with ties to Chaco have expressed concern for its protection and have requested government to government consultation for the BLM planning process.

The situation with oil and gas leasing on Navajo land adjacent to Chaco is less clear since their process is handled differently from BLM lands. There has been significant pressure on individual Navajo landowners to lease their land in exchange for upfront lease payments. As more leases are issued near Chaco, the need for effective communication among land management agencies and the Navajo Nation is critical. NPCA will remain engaged and focused on protecting the important spiritual connections to the ancient Chacoan culture and the cultural and natural resources of the area from poorly planned energy development.

Below: Ruins in Chaco Culture National Historic Park, NM. ©James Stewart | Dreamstime.com



Grand Canyon's Strong Ties with Native Americans

Artefacts found in the Grand Canyon show that people have lived there for almost 12,000 years. The park has recorded more than 4,300 prehistoric sites, and archaeologists estimate there could be a total of 60,000, a strong testimony to the vast extent of human history in this region. That history lives on as the descendants of those ancient peoples—Paiute, Apache, Hopi, Zuni, and others—continue to utilize the area today.

Grand Canyon National Park regularly consults with 11 tribes who each have a deep cultural affiliation with the Grand Canyon. In addition to advising on projects and helping interpret their cultures to the almost 5 million annual visitors to the park, tribal concerns can affect how park lands are managed. For instance, identification of sacred sites by Native Americans has led to special protection for sacred springs along the Colorado River and a recent controversial closure of the Deer Creek Narrows.

Native American control of the Grand Canyon is even more direct for the Havasupai and Hualapai Indians, who still live and work on their own lands, located outside of the park but still in the Grand Canyon.

The Havasupai have always lived in Grand Canyon. Visiting their land, where you can camp or stay in the tribally-owned motel, is a trip of a lifetime. To get there, you must hike, ride a horse, or helicopter in because there are no roads. The iconic turquoise-colored waterfalls near Supai Village grace calendars and inhabit the memory of everyone who has been there.

Visitors have also started to come in droves to the Hualapai part of the Grand Canyon, a one-million-acre reservation that stretches south from the Colorado River at the canyon's western end. Advertised as "Grand Canyon West," especially to nearby Las Vegas, the area offers visitors packaged tours that can include spectacular views from the "Skywalk" (a glass bridge that enables visitors to walk beyond the rim at 4,000 feet above the Colorado River), helicopter and boat tours, and other excursions on the reservation.

Adjacent to the eastern side of the park, on lands owned by the Navajo Nation, a proposed rim-side resort with an aerial tramway to the Colorado River has been met with much concern by local Navajo families, river-runners, NPCA and other conservation groups, and other tribes,

including the Zuni and Hopi. This remote location, where the Little Colorado River meets the Colorado, is a sacred landscape to these tribes as well as traditional Navajo. Any next steps NPCA and other protesters will take awaits a decision by the Navajo tribal council, which has not yet approved plans presented to them by the outside developers.

Navajo and Hopi people living near the Navajo Generating Station, 12 miles from Grand Canyon, and the coal mine that supplies it are impacted by the same pollution from the plant that obscures the iconic views from the rim of the park. NPCA counts several indigenous groups as our allies in the effort to either bring modern pollution controls to this and other regional power plants, or better still, start the quick transition to alternative forms of energy production. For more information on this, see <http://bit.ly/Xe4sxs>.

The legacy of uranium mining in and near the Grand Canyon, with soil and water made toxic by what has been left behind, has caused much suffering for the Indian nations that were impacted. All of the affiliated groups supported the 20-year uranium mining moratorium placed by the administration on a million acres of federal land surrounding Grand Canyon National Park. The Havasupai have protested uranium mining upstream from their homeland for decades. They are a legal partner to NPCA and other conservation groups intervening in court challenges that mining companies have made trying to overturn the uranium moratorium.

NPCA and Native Americans cooperate on other Grand Canyon issues. The Havasupai, the park, and NPCA share concerns about expanded development at the gateway community of Tusayan that could impact the reservation's water supplies, and the fragile ecology of the park's springs. Several of the tribes, along with NPCA and other stakeholders, are intimately involved in a Department of Interior process of managing flows from Glen Canyon Dam to better protect resources along the river in the Grand Canyon, including cultural sites, endangered species, and recreational activities like fishing and river trips.

Left: Confluence of the Little Colorado and the Colorado River, AZ - the proposed site of the Escalante project. ©IlexImage | Istockphoto.com





EVENTS IN THE SOUTHWEST

Canyonlands National Park Turns 50

Lending a Hand On National Public Lands Day

Autumn is not only one of the more beautiful times of year to visit your favorite park but it is also an excellent opportunity to volunteer with other community members and park lovers on National Public Lands Day. On September 27, more than 50 volunteers spent time in Petrified National Park in Arizona in the newly acquired Paulsell Ranch area removing old fencing to help wildlife move more freely. In Utah, groups of students and families collected seeds from three different areas for a re-planting project in Cedar Breaks National Monument. Both of these events were organized and hosted by NPCA and National Park Service staff members. More information about National Public Lands Day—which happens every September—can be found at www.publiclandsday.org/.



Above: Canyonlands National Park, UT ©Neal Herbert **Right:** Volunteers hike along an old prospect road that will become a new wilderness trail at Petrified Forest National Park, AZ. ©Kevin Dahl | NPCA

On September 12th, 1964, President Lyndon Johnson officially signed into law the creation of Canyonlands National Park, finally giving recognition and protection to the outstanding geologic landscape. Then-Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall said “if this isn’t a national park then I’ve never seen one.” The Friends of Arches and Canyonlands Parks: The Bates Wilson Legacy Foundation, threw a three-day party in Moab and in the Needles District in celebration of this memorable event which included a historic film festival, community gatherings, and a special presentation by historian Douglas Brinkley, author of *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* and *The Quiet World*. More than 450 people attended the September celebration. Reflecting on the event, Regional Director David Nimkin said, “The celebration reflected the deep connection and love we hold for the extraordinary beauty and remoteness of Canyonlands. It reinforced for me why it is so very important to protect this majestic place from growing threats of energy development and other incompatible activities”.

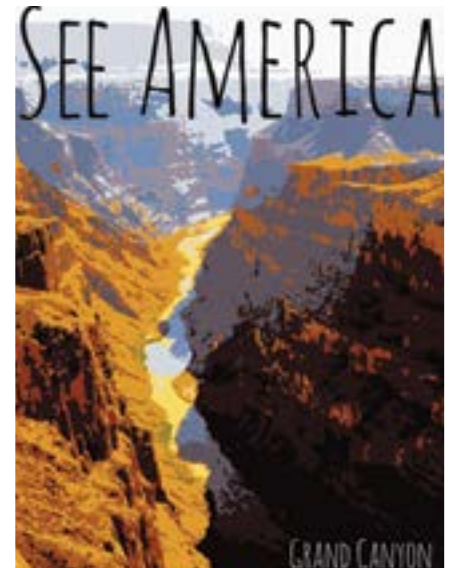
See America Project Meets Outdoor Retailers – Summer 2014

NPCA has partnered with the Creative Action Network to showcase the country's most spectacular landscapes and natural features in posters modeled after the artworks the government commissioned more than 75 years ago in a New Deal program. Artists from all over the country have creatively designed some amazing images representing our national parks, monuments, and historical sites. The Southwest Regional office had the privilege of working with Creative Action Network along with Eagles Nest Outfitters and Liberty Bottleworks in August to highlight the posters at the Outdoor Retailer Show in Salt Lake City, Utah. More than 200 people

attended the two happy-hour events during the five-day trade show that brings over 27,000 outdoor enthusiasts to the area. The show also provided an opportunity for NPCA to showcase our regional programs

and clean air efforts to a very passionate outdoor crowd. For more information about the See America Project and to check out the growing collection of posters online, go to <http://seeamericaproject.com/>.

Right: Death Valley National Park, CA/NV. Poster by Luis Prado | Grand Canyon National Park, UT. Poster by Rendall M. Seely **Below:** Mesquite Sand Dunes in Death Valley National Park, CA/NV. ©Pixcom | Dreamstime.com



2015 ParkScapes Trips are announced! Check out the newly released schedule here!

www.npca.org/exploring-our-parks/travel-with-npca/2015tours.html

Although there are 14 different exciting itineraries to choose from, we here in the Southwest seem to think the trips in our region are the best! Take a peek at what our travel team has selected. Don't hesitate to contact them at 800.628.7275 or email travel@npca.org for more information or to request your 2015 ParkScapes annual brochure. Please keep in mind most of our trips are limited to sixteen travelers to maintain an eight-to-one participant-guide ratio. If one of our 2015 ParkScapes tours doesn't fit your schedule remember most trips have alternate departure dates or if we are not going to the parks you are interested in, check out NPCA's Custom Journey Travel Program. For more information on the Custom Journeys program call 855.241.7620 or email journey@npca.org.