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with adventure all year long.
Come back again and again!*

- Archaeological Center of the United States
- Home to Mesa Verde National Park
- Trail of the Ancients National Scenic Byway
- Fine accommodations and restaurants for all budgets
- Gateway to the San Juan Skyway,
“America’s Most Beautiful Drive”
- Day tours to historic and scenic wonders
- Indian dancers, storytellers, art, pottery, and trading posts
- Excellent area hiking, camping, bicycling and fishing on public lands
- Beautiful 18-hole golf course

*We have additional brochures about area
Day Trips, Boating, Biking, Hiking, Fishing
and even Skiing. Just ask, they’re free!*

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MESA VERDE
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VISITOR INFORMATION BUREAU
P.O. Box HH, Cortez, Colorado 81321
800-253-1616 (USA and Canada)

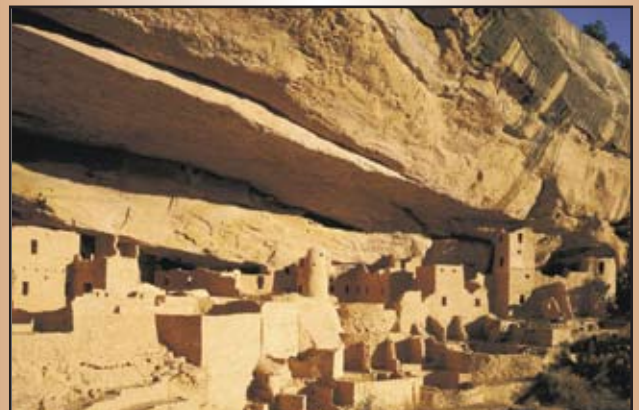
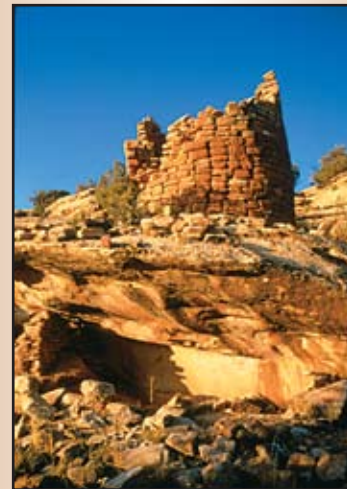
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Revised 4/08



ARCHAEOLOGY

Guide to Ancestral Puebloan Sites along the Trail of the Ancients



*Experience Colorado
from the Beginning!*

ANCIENT CULTURES AND LIVING TRADITIONS.

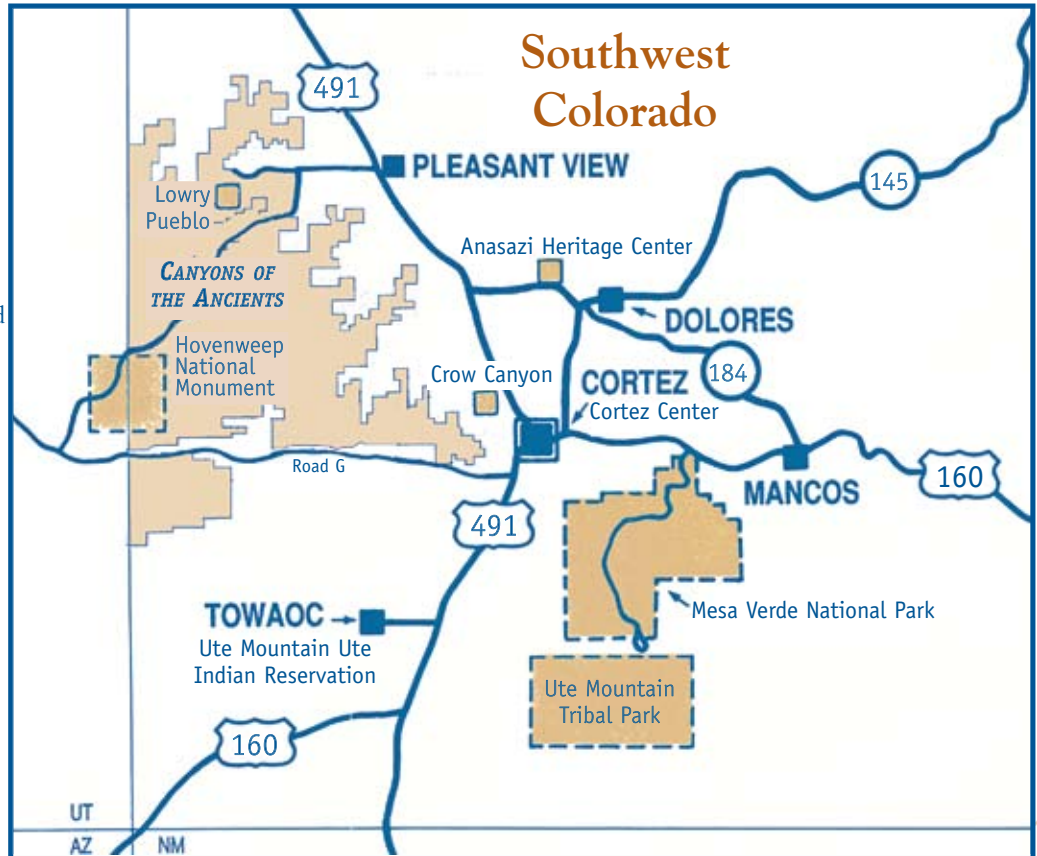
Mesa Verde Country® has become a world center for visitors to experience and study the Ancestral Puebloans. This name replaces the term “Anasazi” at the request of the Pueblo people today. We do not know what they called themselves when they lived in this area from approximately AD 1 to AD 1300.

These early inhabitants hunted game, gathered wild plant foods, and grew corn, beans and squash to supplement their diet. As time passed, agriculture became the mainstay of the Ancestral Puebloan economy. The Ancestral Pueblo people developed architectural skills and produced fine baskets, pottery, ornaments, woven goods and tools. Goods were exchanged with other communities. Relationships with neighboring groups, as well as climatic changes, caused occasional shifts in settlement. As the Ancestral Puebloan culture spread, it developed distinct regional variations. The northern San Juan Ancestral Puebloans occupied southwestern Colorado, including Mesa Verde and the lower Dolores River Valley, and portions of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

The population grew and expanded throughout the region, clustering in small villages. Between AD 1000 and AD 1300, the Ancestral Puebloan population may have been larger than that of the present population of Montezuma County.

Mesa Verde Country® is home to **Trail of the Ancients**, the only National Scenic Byway dedicated solely to archaeology. This brochure illustrates the many wonderful attractions that are located along the **Trail of the Ancients**:

- Cortez Cultural Center
- Mesa Verde National Park
- Anasazi Heritage Center/Canyons of the Ancients National Monument
- Lowry Pueblo
- Ute Mountain Tribal Park
- Crow Canyon Archaeological Center
- Hovenweep National Monument



Detailed brochures and information on these and other attractions are available at the Colorado Welcome Center, 928 E. Main, Cortez, or on the Mesa Verde Country® website, www.mesaverdecountry.com.

PLEASE REMEMBER: Our cultural heritage depends on your care! Please do not remove, mar or otherwise disturb archaeological sites, structures, rock art, or other antiquities. Federal and state law prohibits disturbance of cultural resources on public lands.



Cortez Cultural Center

The Cortez Cultural Center is located in the heart of downtown Cortez, in an historic 1908 building. Founded in 1987, the Center is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide educational, cultural, and artistic programs for its members and the public and to honor the diverse cultural heritage of the Four Corners Region. Also part of the Center, the Hawkins Preserve, donated by Radio Pioneer Jack Hawkins, has 122 acres rich in archaeological sites.

Local and national performers and lecturers are hosted at the Center throughout the year. Native American dances, cultural programs and the outdoor drama Black Shawl are held at the Center mid-May through the end of August, Monday – Saturday. The art gallery at the Center displays the work of local and regional artists with exhibit changes each month.

The Museum is open Monday through Saturday, late May through August, 10:00 am - 10:00 pm and September through May, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm and features interpretive exhibits on the Basketmaker, Pueblo, Ancestral Pueblo, Hohokam, Ute Mountain Ute and Navajo Tribes, as well as the early Pioneers.

For further information: Cortez Cultural Center, 25 North Market, Cortez, Colorado 81321. 970-565-1151
www.cortezculturalcenter.org.



Mesa Verde National Park

Established by Congress on June 29, 1906, Mesa Verde is the first National Park set aside to preserve the works of humankind. During the summer months, visitors may walk through five major cliff dwellings, Cliff Palace, Balcony House, and Long House by guided tour, and Spruce Tree House and Step House on a self-guided basis. They may also see numerous mesa top villages built by the Ancestral Puebloan people between AD 600 and AD 1300.

Mesa Verde offers the visitor an unparalleled opportunity to see and experience a little of what life was like for the Ancestral Puebloans, who moved from this area into New Mexico and Arizona and became the Rio Grande Pueblos in New Mexico and the Hopi people in Arizona. Their descendants have oral traditions about their ancestors, and archaeologists have done extensive research on them.

The Mesa Verde (Spanish for “green table”) Plateau also provides the visitor with spectacular vistas in all directions. From Park Point at 8,571 feet, you will see over 100 miles into Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona. The park abounds with wildlife. You may catch a fleeting glimpse of a mountain lion, bobcat, deer, mountain sheep, or elk. Eagles, hawks and other raptors are often seen soaring over the park’s north rim, and plant life is a unique blend of species found in the mountains and deserts.

The park’s archaeological museum is open every day of the year and houses the full range of artifacts uncovered in and near Mesa Verde. Spruce Tree House is the third largest cliff dwelling in the park and is open all year long. Other cliff dwellings are only accessible when accompanied by ranger guides. Camping and lodging are available in the park May through October.

For further information: Mesa Verde National Park, P. O. Box 8, Mesa Verde, Colorado 81330, 970-529-4465,
www.nps.gov/meve.



Canyons of the Ancients National Monument/Anasazi Heritage Center

The Anasazi Heritage Center is located nine miles north of Cortez or three miles west of Dolores on Highway 184. The museum interprets the history and culture of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, Trail of the Ancients, and the Four Corners Region. The Center features ancient pottery, interactive displays, changing exhibits and special events. The Center includes two 12th century archaeological sites, Dominguez and Escalante Pueblos, and a short interpretative walk. Exhibits at the Center encourage visitor involvement through use of computers, microscopes, “touch” drawers and weaving materials. There is also an archaeological test profile and a partially reconstructed pithouse. The Center is open daily from 9 to 5, March – October, and 10 to 4 November – February (closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s day.) Admission is charged.

As of June 2000, the Center is also the Visitor Center for the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The Monument covers almost 164,000 acres and has been set aside to preserve the archaeological sites located there. Much of the Monument is very remote and only a few areas are open to the public. Visitors are requested to stop at the Anasazi Heritage Center to obtain maps and information on places to visit in the Monument.

For further information: Anasazi Heritage Center, 27501 Highway 184, Dolores, Colorado 81323, 970-882-5600,
www.co.blm.gov/ahc or www.co.blm.gov/canm.



Lowry Pueblo

Lowry Pueblo is a National Historic Landmark, and the only developed recreation site within the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The Pueblo has stabilized standing walls, 40 rooms, eight kivas, and a Great Kiva. The site is wheelchair accessible with a picnic area, toilet, and trails. Lowry is located off Highway 491 at Pleasant View. Travel to County Road CC and go 9 miles. (Route is marked and is a

combination of asphalt and gravel roads.)

For further information: Anasazi Heritage Center, 27501 Highway 184, Dolores, Colorado 81323, 970-882-5600, www.co.blm.gov/ahc or www.co.blm.gov/canm.



Ute Mountain Tribal Park

The Ute Mountain Tribal Park is a part of the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Reservation. It has been set aside by the Tribe to preserve the remnants of the prehistoric culture known as the Ancestral Puebloans that inhabited a broad geographic region in Southwest Colorado. The Park encompasses approximately 125,000 acres centering along a 25-mile stretch of the Mancos River. Within the boundaries of the park are hundreds of surface sites and cliff dwellings, a select number of which are open for visitation. There are also historic Ute pictographs and ancient petroglyphs.

The Tribal Park is operated primarily as a primitive area to protect its cultural and environmental resources. Emphasis is placed on experiencing the natural setting. In order to visit the park, a reservation must be made for a guided tour offered by Ute tribal members.

Remote full-day and half-day tours are offered to the archaeological sites. They begin at 8:30 AM by arrangement at the Tribal Park Visitor Center/Museum, located 20 miles south of Cortez, CO at Highway 160/491. Camping is also available at the park's primitive campground. Bring adequate water, food, and comfortable clothes, as there are no accommodations in the park.

For further information: Ute Mountain Tribal Park, Towaoc, Colorado 81334, 800-847-5485 or 970-565-9653, www.utemountainute.com.



Crow Canyon Archaeological Center

The Crow Canyon Archaeological Center is noted worldwide for its archaeological research and education programs designed to expand awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the Ancestral Puebloan (Anasazi) cultures of the Mesa Verde region. All of Crow Canyon's work includes involvement with a Native American Advisory Group to ensure cultural integrity and sensitivity.

Every year, students from across the USA spend up to five days on Crow Canyon's 170 acre campus, participating in excavation programs and learning first-hand about prehistoric lifestyles. Participants in Crow Canyon's week-long Adult Research Programs excavate and analyze artifacts, studying side-by-side with the professional archaeological research staff at Crow Canyon.

Crow Canyon's archaeological Day Programs, available by reservation only, are tailored to briefly immerse visitors into Ancestral Puebloan history and include a tour of a working excavation in the Mesa Verde region.

For further information: Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, 23390 Road K, Cortez, CO, 81321, 800-422-8975 or 970-565-8975, www.crowcanyon.org.



Hovenweep National Monument

Hovenweep National Monument was established by Presidential proclamation on March 2, 1923. The Square Tower Complex is located 43 miles west of Cortez, Colorado and covers 400 acres. A visitor center, restrooms, and a two-mile moderate walk through a canyon and past several archaeological sites are located at Square Tower. The Square Tower area serves as headquarters for six Ancestral Puebloan villages that were constructed around AD 1200 in the Hovenweep Canyons.

The archaeological sites at Hovenweep, a Ute word meaning deserted valley, are characterized by their unusual square, oval, circular, and D-shaped towers. The inhabitants of Hovenweep, like their neighbors in Mesa Verde National Park, left their homes by about AD 1300 and journeyed south into the Hopi country of Arizona and along the banks of the Rio Grande in New Mexico.

If a peaceful walk through piñon and juniper trees to remote archaeological sites appeals to you, then Hovenweep is an ideal destination. There is a modern campground at Hovenweep that is open year round. Camping supplies, firewood, and gas-line should be purchased in Cortez before heading to Hovenweep, as these are not available in the Monument.

For further information: Hovenweep National Monument, McElmo Route, Cortez, CO, 81321, 970-562-4282, www.nps.gov/hove.



General Services

Services such as gas, food, lodging and sundries may be obtained in the towns of Cortez and Dolores, and at Mesa Verde National Park. Many of these archaeological sites are located in remote areas and do not have ready access to amenities. Please make sure you have a full tank of gas, water and food before venturing out to many of these Ancestral Puebloan sites along **The Trail of the Ancients**.