

# Fort Davis National Historic Site

## SET OF SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

Fort Davis is one of the best remaining examples in the Southwest of a typical post-Civil War frontier fort because of the extent of the surviving structures and ruins.

Fort Davis provides an excellent opportunity for understanding and appreciating the important role played by African Americans in the West and specifically in the frontier army because black troops served at the post from 1867 to 1885.

Fort Davis provided essential troops and supplies to the Victorio Campaign, which ended meaningful resistance of Apache bands in the Trans-Pecos.

The historic integrity and character of the military post has not been significantly altered since its establishment. Much of the landscape immediately adjacent to the post has undergone little change.

Fort Davis was strategically located to defend the Trans-Pecos portion of the San Antonio-El Paso Road and the Chihuahua Trail. This encompassed controlling activities on the southern stem of the Great Comanche War Trail and Mescaero Apache war trails.

## SET OF PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The history of Fort Davis, encompassing the conflict between native peoples (Apaches, Comanches, and Kiowas) and the ever-increasing flow of emigrants and settlers to the Trans-Pecos region, provides opportunities to explore the ideas of security, sovereignty, and cultural identity in the American West.

The historical integrity of Fort Davis (including quality and quantity of original fabric, historic records and artifacts, and the cultural/natural landscape) enables a deeper understanding of the realities of frontier military life in the American West.

The history of African-American soldiers at Fort Davis is an important chapter in the larger American social movement toward equality for all citizens, a movement that continues today.

# Colorado National Monument

## SET OF SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

Erosion in the monument has exposed a billion and a half years of Earth history. Here, a dramatic sequence of folded and fractured rock formations has been sculpted to form a spectacular array of canyons, plateaus, arches and towering spires.

The monument's 1.7-billion-year-old Precambrian basement rock and the 1.5-billion-year Precambrian-to-Triassic gap in the geologic record at Colorado National Monument illustrate important episodes in the continuing cycle of dynamic earth processes with continent-wide ramifications.

Once a range of the ancestral Rockies, the ancient highlands that existed here as a result of several uplifts were the source of sediments deposited over much of the Colorado Plateau, creating the spectacular landforms seen in other parks (Arches, Canyon de Chelly, Canyonlands, Grand Canyon, etc.).

Colorado National Monument is a clear and powerful example of ongoing dynamic geologic cycles such as uplift, erosion, and deposition that serve as and provide a "living laboratory" for scientific study, education, and interpretation.

Colorado National Monument provides an introduction to many of the physical and biological features of the Colorado Plateau.

Spectacular landforms and the interplay of light, shadow, and color create glorious vistas from vantage points in the Grand Valley and the national monument.

In close proximity to the urban and rural settings of the Grand Valley, Colorado National Monument provides an opportunity for quiet solitude, recreation, and enjoyment that can evoke strong emotional responses.

The monument's landforms acted as a significant barrier to human use and travel between Glade Park and the Grand Valley; the cultural resources of the monument document how people overcame these barriers.

Visionary, trail builder, champion of the idea that these red rock canyons should be a national park, the life of the monument's first custodian, John Otto, showed how one person can make significant contributions to society.

## SET OF PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Colorado National Monument's dramatic landforms and spectacular vistas are but the latest manifestation of our Earth's continuous recycling process of mountain building, erosion, and deposition within a greater geologic story of continent building and the evolution of unique regional landforms.

The evidence of human use within the imposing and dramatic landscapes of Colorado National Monument is a powerful reminder of how geologic features and forces have challenged, and continue to challenge, the human drive to occupy, survive, and thrive in seemingly inhospitable landscapes.

The spectacular landforms and sublime natural beauty of Colorado National Monument provide opportunities for solitude, exploration, inspiration, and renewal that can fulfill the human need for self-discovery through connection to the land.

Established during the Progressive Era in American history, Colorado National Monument is emblematic of our nation's first conservation movement, during which concerned citizens like John Otto worked with vision and perseverance to have recognized and preserved for future generations those special lands and values that comprise our American heritage.

The protected lands of Colorado National Monument, adjacent to a large and growing urban population, preserve valuable habitat for biotic communities of the Colorado Plateau — and serve as an outdoor laboratory for scientific research and environmental education.

# Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

## SET OF SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park features Mauna Loa and Kilauea, two of the most active volcanoes in the world.

Mauna Loa — measured from its base deep beneath the surface of the sea to its peak — contains more material by volume than any other mountain on Earth.

The unusually high degree of approachability to the park's active volcanism affords opportunities for fundamental and detailed research not duplicated (or even approached) in any other park in the world, offering relatively safe experiences with lava flows, fountains, and other products of active volcanism.

The long history and collaborative nature of the research performed by the USGS Hawai'i Volcano Observatory and others at Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park have made Mauna Loa and Kilauea among the most studied and best understood volcanoes in the world.

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park provides critical living space in a wide variety of ecological zones for the highly endemic native biota, much of which is threatened or endangered, requiring active management of native and non-native species.

The diversity and importance of the cultural resources in Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park — and the protection of natural features and processes afforded by national park status — combine to make Hawai'i Volcanoes critically important to the perpetuation of traditional native Hawaiian religion and culture.

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park encompasses the largest expanse of Hawaiian natural environment managed as wilderness, with the associated wilderness values of natural sounds, lack of mechanization and development, natural darkness, and opportunities for solitude.

The park's resources are so rare, valuable, and inspirational to all the people of the world that the United Nations has declared the park an International Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site.

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park protects the most extensive tract of protected montane tropical rain forest in the National Park Service.

The structural complexity and isolation of the Hawaiian Islands and their active volcanic setting makes them a world-class living laboratory of biogeography and evolution. The protected status of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park lands offers important opportunities for this work to continue.

## SET OF PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The approachable, active volcanoes of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park allow first-hand discovery of and connection with one of the most fundamental forces of our world — in both its creative and destructive roles.

The journeys of the Hawaiian people, who continue to inhabit these rich and diverse lands, include cultural clashes, adaptations, and assimilations that provide enduring lessons about human resourcefulness, interdependence, and respect for the life of the land.

In Hawai'i, active volcanism created an isolated home for a few immigrant species that gave rise to a rich yet fragile endemic biota; due to the accelerating change brought about by human actions, much of that unique heritage continues to be lost to extinction, challenging all of us to learn from the past and work together to preserve the remaining native plants and animals.

Kilauea, the home of Pele, is sacred to many Native Hawaiians: it is a place of birth and the well-spring of many spirits and forces; the active volcanism, the features of the terrain, and the plants and animals that live there are all important to Native Hawaiian sense of identity, unity, and continuity.

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park provides an opportunity for people to experience the values of Hawai'i's diverse wilderness; the park's designation as a World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Reserve attests to its importance as a benchmark for monitoring environmental change.

# Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

## SET OF SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

Great Sand Dunes National Monument contains the tallest dunes in North America (over 700 feet high) and one of the most complex dune systems in the world created by the continuing interaction of wind, sand, and water.

The dunes are an internationally significant high-altitude, seasonally cold climate eolian system.

The creeks that flow near the dunes support a consistent surge flow that is a unique hydrologic phenomenon.

The monument's 38,000 acres support a great diversity of plants and animals, spanning desert to montane life zones.

The dunes represent a unique high desert habitat that supports at least three known endemic insect species: the Great Sand Dunes Tiger Beetle, a species of Darkling Beetle, and an unnamed Flower Beetle.

The park provides a unique opportunity for recreation and play without fear of damage to the dunes or adjacent water resources.

The unexpected combination of massive dunes surrounded by alpine peaks, a desert valley, and creeks flowing on the surface of the sand make Great Sand Dunes a unique American landscape that inspires an emotional response.

Great Sand Dunes has been identified as an area of special importance by people of various cultures.

Great Sand Dunes is situated along a major historic route into the San Luis Valley.

Great Sand Dunes contain rare Clovis/Folsom archeological sites and the largest known stand of culturally scarred ponderosa pine.

The landscape of Great Sand Dunes National Monument and the extensive surrounding areas characterized by vast, primitive mountains and rural rangeland offer a rare opportunity to experience this national treasure in a harmonious setting.

Great Sand Dunes National Monument, particularly the backcountry, offers exceptional solitude, quiet, and an unspoiled day and night sky dome. These exceptional values are further complemented by the current levels of visitation, which have resulted in a spacious and uncongested experience.

## SET OF PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

**The unexpected combination of massive dunes surrounded by alpine peaks, a desert valley, and creeks flowing on the surface of the sand makes Great Sand Dunes National Monument a unique landscape that inspires awe, mystery, and wonder.**

**Though the active dune field appears stark and empty, Great Sand Dunes National Monument is actually a rich and complex environment with a great diversity of plants and animals living in a variety of distinctive natural communities, creating opportunities for unique experiences, personal exploration and recreation, scientific discovery, and enjoyable learning.**

**The tall dunes and the life they support are the most visible indicators of the health of an ecosystem that extends far beyond monument boundaries; to protect the ecological health of the park, Great Sand Dunes National Monument must partner with the larger community in managing the whole.**

**Just as human survival is dependent upon water, this complex, dynamic dune ecosystem, with its distinctive geological and biological character, is dependent on the area's rare, fragile, and pristine water system for its continued existence.**

**The same physical characteristics that influenced the formation of the sand dunes created a major cultural crossroads, resulting in a landscape of special significance to many people over thousands of years.**

# Chiricahua National Monument

## SET OF SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

Chiricahua National Monument contains one of the most spectacular and extensive areas of rhyolitic pinnacles and spires in the world.

Chiricahua National Monument protects part of the Sierra Madre "sky island" complex — one of the three major "megadiversity" areas found in the world where four major biomes intersect each other (Sierra Madre, Rocky Mountain, Chihuahuan Desert, and Sonora Desert).

Chiricahua National Monument is a Congressionally mandated wilderness area.

Chiricahua National Monument preserves exceptionally clean air and low levels of light and noise that enhance biodiversity, scenic viewsheds, and night sky viewing.

Chiricahua National Monument preserves the transition from prehistoric peoples to Chiricahua Apaches to 19<sup>th</sup> century pioneer settlers to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Faraway Ranch) including an Army encampment used during the Geronimo campaign, a homestead, a working cattle/guest ranch, and related artifacts.

Chiricahua National Monument contains one of only two known monuments created by Buffalo Soldiers.

Chiricahua National Monument preserves the location of a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp as well as CCC-built stone structures and trails listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## SET OF PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Begun with an afternoon's violent deposition of white-hot ash, the spectacular rhyolite formation of Chiricahua National Monument has been sculpted by erosion through the ages, and continues to be sculpted today as a living work-in-progress.

Chiricahua National Monument is centered at a crossroads of four major environments (Sierra Madre, Rocky Mountain, Chihuahuan Desert, and Sonora Desert), providing opportunities to explore and study a surprisingly accessible wilderness of richly diverse plant and animal life where natural processes continue relatively unaffected by human influence.

The lack of major human enterprise and development, and the history of rural lifestyles, have protected the land in and around Chiricahua National Monument and its wilderness character of clean air, low noise, and clear night skies, all of which contribute to opportunities for rejuvenation and contemplation.

The rich and enduring heritage of the land in and around the Chiricahua Mountains is a testament to how the area's inhabitants have left their mark on the land and, in turn, have been changed by it.

# Rocky Mountain National Park

## SET OF SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS

Rocky Mountain National Park's resources possess unusually high quality and integrity.

Natural processes here operate to create an environment of outstanding scenic beauty where the ecosystems of the southern Rocky Mountains exist in unusually close proximity to one another.

Rocky Mountain National Park's vast expanse of spectacular mountain terrain at the crest of the continent beckons to people from around the world.

This scenic landscape has a long history of providing human populations along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains with intimate wilderness experiences.

## SET OF PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Natural systems and processes operate here to create an environment of great scenic beauty and diverse flora and fauna providing outstanding opportunities for recreation, learning, and spiritual renewal.

Rocky Mountain National Park's spectacular mountain wilderness at the crest of the continent beckons to people from around the world and creates a sense of connection, memory, and affection that can strengthen the ethic of stewardship.

Rocky Mountain National Park serves as a biological benchmark of international significance aiding understanding of the interconnectedness of the Earth's resources and the importance of national parks as outdoor laboratories where the health of the planet can be assessed.

Human use of this land has evolved over time from an economy based on resource extraction to an economy based on tourism and recreation, presenting us with the continuing challenge of balancing human use with resource preservation.

The area that is now Rocky Mountain National Park was home to Indian peoples for thousands of years and, though they were removed to reservations, it continues to be a sacred place for Uintah and Ouray Ute and Northern Arapahoe peoples and is still important to their sense of cultural identity.

## ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITIES OF INTERPRETATION

Visitors to Rocky Mountain National Park will better enjoy their visit if we can help them become oriented to the park in ways that enhance their visit. The National Park Service is interested in reducing the number of accidents in national parks by providing visitors with up-to-date outdoor safety and appropriate wilderness use information.

As the United States' primary preservation organization, the National Park Service is responsible for providing for the protection, use, and enjoyment of those natural, scenic, and cultural resources that most clearly define our national character. The history of the National Park System and the mission of the National Park Service are important aspects of the interpretive program of national parks.