

NPCA TRAVEL



The Travel Program of the National Parks Conservation Association

SEPT. 26–OCT. 2, 2021

Check Out

Four national park sites, including two UNESCO World Heritage Sites
How NPCA addresses ongoing issues of oil and gas development in the region along the Rio Grande

NATURAL FORTUNES OF THE **Four Corners**

Discover the connections between the cultural heritage of the Ancestral Puebloans and local modern-day tribes

CLIFF PALACE
Mesa Verde
National Park



Natural Fortunes of the Four Corners

 **Activity level: Moderate**

AVAILABLE DATES: September 26–October 2, 2021 | Min/Max: 10/16

7 days/6 nights | **NPCA Member Price:** \$4,655 per person double occupancy; \$520 single supplement

Deposit: \$980 per person due at registration

Arrive/Depart: Arrivals to Albuquerque, New Mexico; Departures from Durango, Colorado

Reservations: Please contact Jared Dial, NPCA's Travel Program Manager, at 1.800.628.7275 or email the Travel Program at travel@npca.org.

Inclusions: Accommodations as noted in the itinerary, meals as noted (B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner), all gratuities, ground transportation, sightseeing and excursions as listed, and guest speakers, and carbon credits for each traveler's on-trip footprint

Exclusions: Airfare to Albuquerque/from Durango, luggage charges, alcohol and personal expenses, ground transportation between Durango and Albuquerque at the conclusion of the trip (which can be arranged at an additional cost), and travel insurance

Welcome to the Four Corners region, known for sweeping vistas, internationally recognized dark skies, diverse plant and animal species, and remains of the homes left behind by the Ancestral Puebloan culture, whose sites are sacred to modern Pueblo descendants. It is also an area at risk of increased oil and gas development, which threatens priceless sacred lands and archeological sites. On this trip, journey alongside NPCA experts to experience these important places firsthand and get a behind-the-scenes look at how NPCA is fighting to protect them. Beginning in Albuquerque, New Mexico, meet with your NPCA host and partners for an introduction to the rich history of the Four Corners and an overview of NPCA's present-day priorities in the region. Get to know your fellow travelers over a welcome reception and dinner. The next morning, travel north to Chaco Culture National Historical Park for our first immersion into Ancestral Puebloan society and architecture. Chaco is an International Dark Sky Park and one of the richest and least developed archaeological sites in the country. From there, continue to Farmington, where we'll spend the night at a charming bed and breakfast. Next, we will head north toward Colorado, stopping along the way at Aztec Ruins National Monument. Arrive at Mesa Verde National Park, the perfect setting for taking in Puebloan history and enjoying the beauty of the region. Spend two days hiking and exploring the park's ancient structures, many of which were built directly into the cliffsides. NPCA staff and partners will provide insights into the present and future challenges these areas face. On our final full day, journey to nearby Hovenweep National Monument, another International Dark Sky Park and area where NPCA is fighting serious energy development threats. The trip wraps up in Durango, Colorado, where we toast our travels alongside NPCA staff and partners. Please note: This itinerary is subject to change based on weather conditions and park closures related to COVID-19.

ITINERARY

DAY Arrivals into Albuquerque

1 Welcome to the Southwest! After flying into Albuquerque, New Mexico (ABQ), meet your NPCA host and trip leader and take a private shuttle to **Old Town Albuquerque** to check into your hotel room. If you arrive early, you can take advantage with a stroll around this historic part of the city, steeped in Native American and Spanish culture. We'll kick off the trip with a **welcome dinner** and a chance to get to know our fellow travelers. Our NPCA host will give an overview of the themes we'll encounter in the days ahead. We'll enjoy a group dinner before settling in for the night at the historic Hotel Albuquerque. **Hotel Albuquerque (D)**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Spend two full days exploring cliff dwellings and other archeological sites at Mesa Verde National Park
- Wander through the Puebloan "great houses" at Chaco Culture National Historical Park
- Get a behind-the-scenes look at the threats to the cultural landscape of southwestern Utah at Hovenweep National Monument
- Stargaze under some of the darkest skies in the country



Hovenweep Castle,
Hovenweep National
Monument

DAY Chaco Culture National Historic Park

2 After breakfast, we'll check out of our rooms and, if the weather is good, drive north toward Chaco Canyon. It's a long—and at times bumpy!—journey of about three hours, some of which is on dirt roads, but the views and the destination are worth it. We'll arrive at **Chaco Culture National Historical Park**,* a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in time for a picnic lunch and an introduction to the park by park staff. A thousand years ago, people used the five Chacoan “great houses” here to trade, exchange information and celebrate important events. Today, Chaco Culture National Historical Park is designated an **International**

Dark Sky Park. It also faces threats from increasing oil and gas development. We'll learn about these pressures while we explore the park's sophisticated structures alongside local experts. In the late afternoon, we'll continue on toward **Farmington, New Mexico**, about one and a half hours away, where we'll spend the night in the charming Casa Blanca Inn & Suites. Dinner tonight is in downtown Farmington. **Casa Blanca Inn & Suites (B, L, D)**.
**The dirt roads going into and out of Chaco Culture National Historical Park are bumpy. In case of inclement weather, we will visit alternate park sites.*

DAY Aztec Ruins National Monument & Mesa Verde National Park

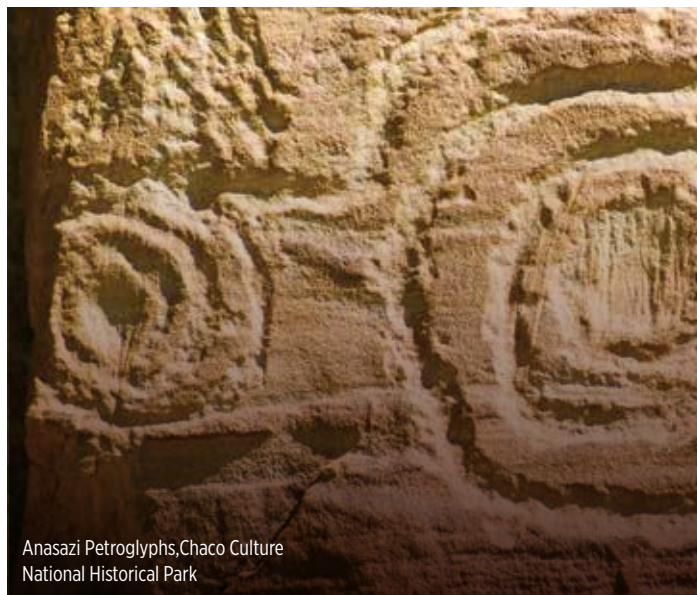
3 After breakfast at Casa Blanca, we set off toward Colorado, stopping along the way at **Aztec Ruins National Monument**, about a 30-minute drive from Farmington. Here, we'll tour the ceremonial Great Kiva, a one-of-a-kind reconstruction with an impressive 40-foot diameter. Take note of the oil well that sits adjacent to these ancient structures; it's a sign of the competing pressures on this land. From Aztec Ruins, we drive about one and a half hours to **Mesa Verde National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to over 600 protected cliff dwellings typical of Ancestral Puebloan culture. We'll begin by meeting with park staff for an introduction to the park and the archaeological importance of its sites. This afternoon, we'll have a chance to stretch our legs on one of the park's many scenic hikes before checking into our lodging for the next three nights. Dinner tonight is in Far View Lodge's Metate Dining Room. Weather permitting, after dinner, we'll have the option to head back outside for a night-sky program. Mesa Verde is in the process of applying for an **International Dark Sky designation**—if conditions are right, we'll get to see why! **Far View Lodge (B, L, D)**

DAY Mesa Verde National Park

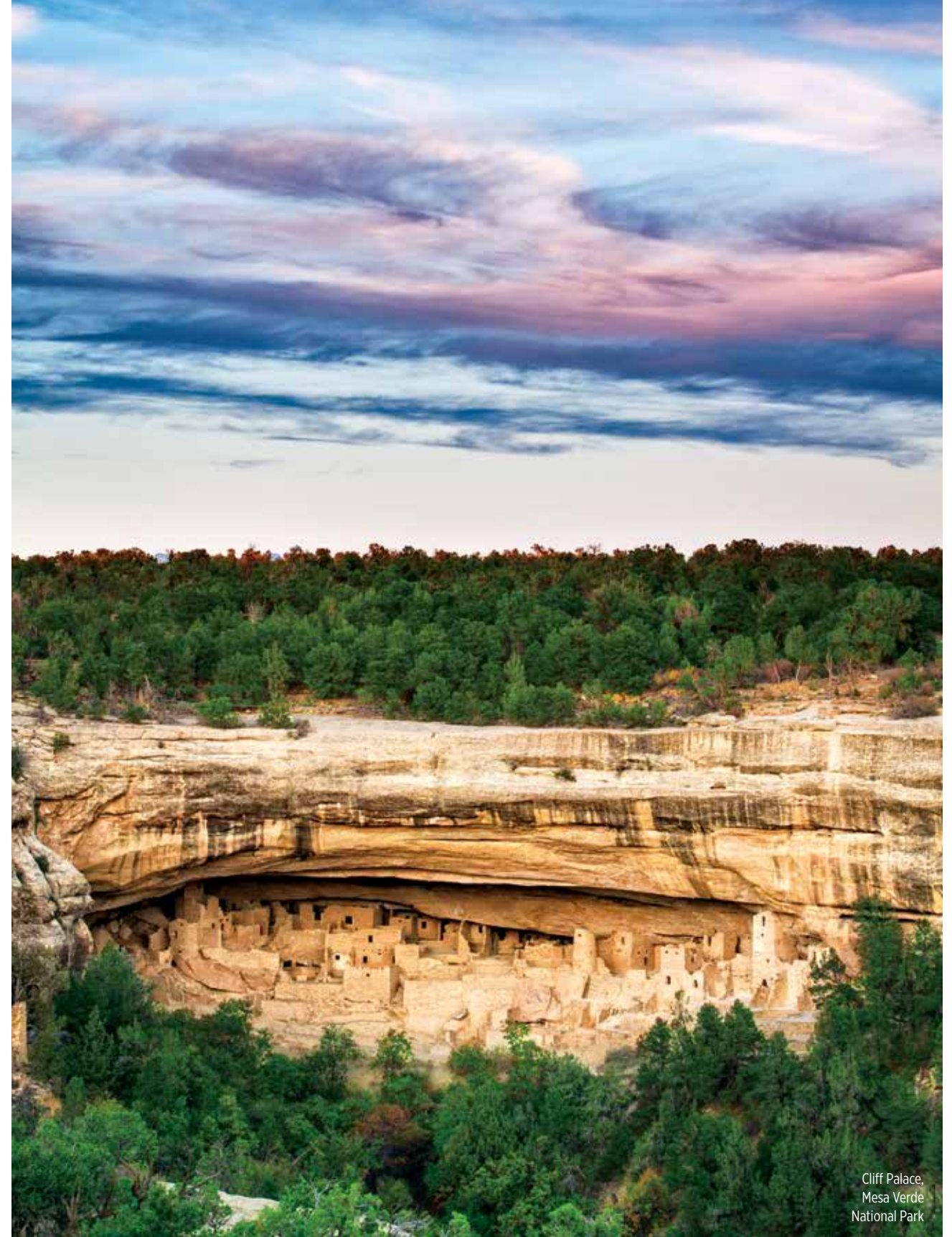
4 Days four and five are dedicated to Mesa Verde National Park. Tour the **Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum**, a national historic landmark that was built with the same materials used by Ancestral Puebloans to construct their homes. After lunch, we'll take a guided tour of **Cliff Palace or Balcony House**, a few of Mesa Verde's largest cliff dwellings, where we'll have a chance to take in the landscape as the original

Pueblo tribes in New Mexico and Arizona know this as their sacred ancestral homeland—not “abandoned,” but still living in oral histories and ceremonial activities. The National Park System values and protects cultural landscapes like Chaco Canyon.

Ernie Atencio, NPCA Southwest Regional Director



Anasazi Petroglyphs, Chaco Culture National Historical Park



Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde National Park

inhabitants would have. For those looking for more adventure, there are options to hike one of the nearby trails or visit another Puebloan site before heading back to our accommodations and dinner as a group. **Far View Lodge (B, L, D)**

DAY Mesa Verde National Park

5 Today, we will take a deeper look into the park and NPCA's role in its conservation. After breakfast, we'll get off the beaten path and explore **Wetherill Mesa**, known as "the quieter side" of Mesa Verde. Explore **Badger House Community**, a series of four mesa top sites that span 600 years of prehistory, and **Step House**, home to two separate construction periods in one site (early Basketmaker pithouses built about 620 CE and a masonry pueblo dating to 1226 CE). In the afternoon, we'll **meet with NPCA experts and partners** for a discussion about the challenges the park faces from proposed oil and gas drilling in the surrounding area. Dinner tonight is in the Metate Dining Room. **Far View Lodge (B, L, D)**

DAY Hovenweep National Monument

6 This morning, we'll head west toward the renowned **Hovenweep National Monument**, just over the border in Utah (approximately one hour and 45 minutes away). Along the way, we'll stop at **Canyons of the Ancients Visitor Center & Museum** for an overview of the structures and cultural legacies we'll see throughout the day. Once in Hovenweep, we'll meet **NPCA partners** who will guide us through the landscape, beginning with the **Square Tower Group**, where the largest collection of structures can be found within Hovenweep. We'll learn about the administration's decision to reduce the size of nearby **Bears Ears National Monument** by nearly

85%, opening the previously protected lands to mineral, oil and gas development. In response, NPCA has been working with tribes, archaeologists, nearby communities and conservation groups to protect Hovenweep's archeological sites and resources. We then drive back east into Colorado and check into the historic Strater Hotel in **Durango** for our final night. Tonight, we'll meet with NPCA staff and partners to reflect on the sites we've visited and the challenges they face. We conclude the evening with a joyous **farewell dinner. Strater Hotel (B, L, D)**

DAY Departures from Durango, CO

7 On our final morning, we'll enjoy breakfast before heading to Durango Airport (DRO) for our flights home. For those choosing to extend your stay in Durango, your trip leader can provide recommendations for the many cultural activities and outdoor adventures the area has to offer. For those wishing to return to Albuquerque, your trip leader can arrange a private transfer upon request. **(B)**

Travel Insurance: To protect yourself from the loss of deposit and cancellation fees, you are encouraged to purchase travel insurance. If you need assistance, NPCA recommends contacting Travel Insurance Services; confirmation packets will include details.

Traveler Responsibility: Travelers are responsible for choosing an NPCA trip consistent with their ability, fitness, and overall health. All travelers are required to complete and return their **registration form, personal information form, flight form, and waiver** before being allowed to participate in a trip. Travelers also are responsible for reading and understanding all pre-departure materials and bringing the appropriate clothing and gear as suggested.

Trip Cancellation Policy: Cancellation notice must be submitted in writing and is effective upon date of receipt.

Until 120 days prior to trip start	119-61 days prior	60 days prior
Deposit is 100% refundable	Deposit is 100% transferrable to another Iconic-operated NPCA trip, or 50% refundable	No refund

LODGING

Find comfort and relaxation in each of the hotel properties we carefully selected for your NPCA trip.



Hotel Albuquerque (Albuquerque, NM): Located in the historic Old Town neighborhood, Hotel Albuquerque is an elegant and convenient place from which to explore the city's rich heritage. All rooms feature expansive views of the nearby Sandia Mountains or a private balcony.



Casa Blanca Inn & Suites (Farmington, NM): A Spanish Colonial Hacienda surrounded by gardens, courtyards and fountains, Casa Blanca Inn & Suites is an unexpected gem in Farmington. Each room is individually decorated to reflect local styles, and most overlook the property's beautiful gardens. After a good night's sleep, wake up to a sumptuous Southwest breakfast.



Far View Lodge (Mesa Verde National Park, CO): Far View Lodge sits on a high shoulder of Mesa Verde and offers panoramic views into three states. Simple and unfussy, this quiet refuge offers guests a chance to soak in the beauty and peacefulness of this special place. Each room has custom handcrafted furniture and a private balcony.



Strater Hotel (Durango, CO): The historic Strater Hotel dates back to 1883 and is a living history museum of the old west and Durango's boomtown days. It is home to the world's largest collection of Victorian antique walnut furniture, much of which appoints the 88 unique guest rooms. The hotel has been lovingly restored and is a feature of any trip to Durango.

COVID19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

NPCA is always committed to providing high quality tours that ensure the well-being and safety of our members and supporters. Each of our travel partners have developed robust safety protocols to protect the health of our guests, staff, and the communities we visit. As conditions and guidelines continue to evolve, our travel partners are committed to easing concerns and creating flexible options for those interested in rescheduling or booking new travel. NPCA advises all individuals to follow the guidance of public health experts at the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization in protecting themselves and their communities from the coronavirus. Specific guidelines such as health screenings and social distancing will be determined based on the trip's date of departure and group size. Please contact us for details.



Why Travel with NPCA?

SAFETY AND FLEXIBILITY

Your health and safety is our top priority. NPCA has worked with each of our travel partners to develop safety measures for our 2021 trips in response to the global pandemic.

EXPERT TRIP LEADERS

Every trip will be led by an NPCA staff expert and naturalist guide. We are teaming up with experienced tour operators to give you exclusive insights into your national parks.

SMALL-SIZED GROUPS

Group size on each of our land trips is limited to no more than 16 people to maximize your interactions with experts, enhance wildlife viewing and boost educational opportunities throughout your experience.

CONVENIENT TRAVEL

Everything is included in your tour, including meals, accommodations, snacks, interpretive guides, special speakers, transportation within the destination and all activities (unless otherwise stated).

ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS

NPCA partners with tour operators that support cultural and natural heritage, maximize the economic benefits in the destinations we operate in and establish guidelines for managing environmental impacts.

EXCELLENT VALUE

Our tours offer members the opportunity to explore the parks without the hassle of planning or the frustrations of crowds. We handle the logistics, so you don't have to.

NPCA EXCLUSIVE COLLECTION

Starting in 2021, we will offer a handful of unique tours designed to give you exclusive experiences within the parks and special behind-the-scenes access to National Park Service staff, NPCA partners, and other local specialists. Our goal is to offer NPCA members the best itineraries in adventure and educational travel in the places we know best: America's national parks. Our custom-designed itineraries highlight NPCA's important contributions to park protection while delivering outstanding interpretive hikes and sight-seeing in national parks around the country.

NPCA is the only independent, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of the National Park System. We are 100% privately funded and we rely on donations from individuals like you. One traveler per group must be an active NPCA member to participate in an NPCA trip. An annual membership starts at \$15 per person. Please make dues payable to NPCA by check or credit card at npca.org.