



MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

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Without comprehensive, landscape-level planning that takes into account the needs of the park and its resources, Mesa Verde could be surrounded by a thousand new oil and gas wells.

Some of the most well-known and well-preserved Ancestral Puebloan archaeological sites in existence are protected within Mesa Verde National Park in southwestern Colorado. The park contains over 5,000 sites, including over 600 cliff dwellings. Mesa Verde is home to the largest cliff dwelling in North America—the Cliff Palace, which dates to the 12th century. Mesa Verde was the first national park to focus on protecting both cultural and natural resources.

The area surrounding Mesa Verde has long been targeted by the oil and gas industry. A 2015 plan for the area included 1,000 new oil and gas wells surrounding the park, sparking concern among community groups. Such an extensive and wide-ranging development plan put numerous park resources at risk.

An alternative plan, which would have included a comprehensive stakeholder process to manage the landscape for multiple uses, was slated to begin under the previous administration's Bureau of Land Management. This would have resulted in a Master

Leasing Plan accounting for the needs of the community, the park and its landscape—not just the needs of extractive industries. That process was halted by the Trump administration. The plan for 1,000 new wells is still in place.

Without the Master Leasing Plan, the landscape is at risk of becoming completely overwhelmed by oil and gas development—something that has already occurred at nearby Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, where 80% of the surrounding BLM lands have been leased and the landscape has been scarred by roads, well pads, storage tanks and pipelines. In 2018, a gas well at Canyons of the Ancients spilled over 3,000 gallons of wastewater, contaminating nearby lands and water resources. We can't let Mesa Verde have a similar future.

Along with Chaco Culture National Historical Park and Hovenweep National Monument, Mesa Verde is part of a cultural landscape that tells the story of an ancient interconnected civilization that is still part of a thriving culture today.

RESOURCES THREATENED

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

OUTDOOR RECREATION
ECONOMY

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

AIR QUALITY

BY THE NUMBERS

2,500

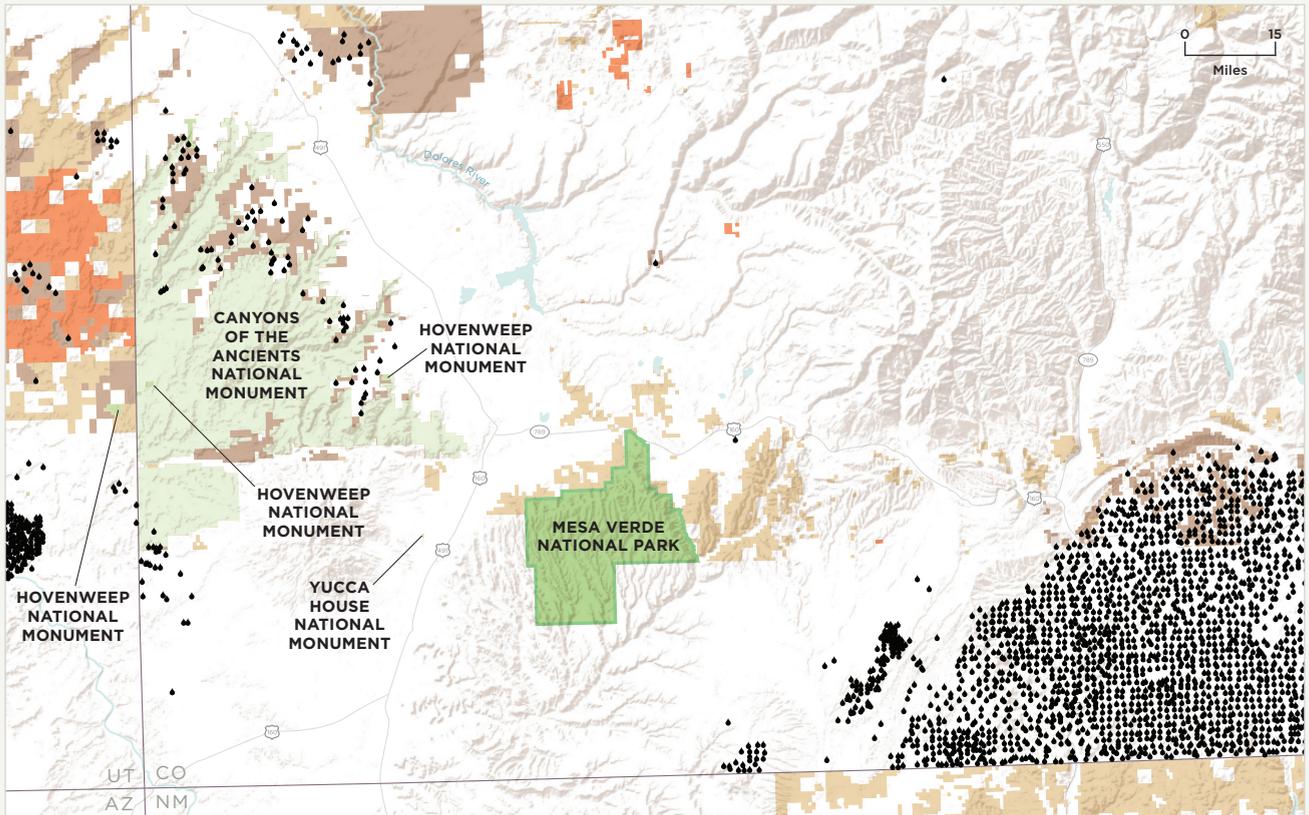
The size of the methane cloud in square miles over Mesa Verde and the Four Corners. This hot spot is the largest ever measured in the United States and is directly attributable to oil and gas development.¹

1,000

The number of new wells included in a 2015 BLM resource management plan for public lands neighboring Mesa Verde

13th

Century when Spruce Tree House, an Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwelling, was built. It is now closed to the public for the first time as fluctuations in temperatures caused by climate change has caused sections of rock to cleave from the rock face.²



¹ Environmental Defense Fund, "New study confirms (again): New Mexico's methane hot spot largely tied to oil and gas pollution," June 15, 2017, blogs.edf.org/energyexchange/2017/06/15/new-study-confirms-again-new-mexicos-methane-hot-spot-largely-tied-to-oil-and-gas-pollution/

² Grace Hood, "In Mesa Verde, Climate Change Reveals New Treasures, Destroys Old Ones," Colorado Public Radio, Aug. 16, 2016, <https://www.cpr.org/2016/08/16/in-mesa-verde-climate-change-reveals-new-treasures-destroys-old-ones/>