



Strategic Action Plan Developed 2022



NPS / SALLY KING

Land Acknowledgement

Bandelier National Monument is the traditional land of many tribal nations. Their cultures, lifestyles, religious beliefs, and traditions have shaped this land and continue to be shaped by their ties to this place. We honor and prioritize the voices and values of these tribal nations to enhance the quality of our shared land stewardship.

Background

In October 2021, Bandelier National Monument (also referred to as “Bandelier,” “the park,” or “the unit” in this document) embarked on a five-year strategic planning exercise. The timing of this exercise was deliberate. Following the departure of the monument's long-serving superintendent late in 2020, the National Park Service (NPS) Regional Office conducted a management review of Bandelier’s program and identified several areas of focus and improvement for the new superintendent: employee communications, planning and

compliance, the park's safety culture, and the recruitment and retention of employees. The management review also concluded that better alignment with the Valles Caldera National Preserve would be beneficial for both park units.

In August 2021, Bandelier National Monument's new superintendent arrived and was charged with not only the management of Bandelier but supporting the superintendent of Valles Caldera National Preserve as well. By beginning the strategic planning process in October 2021, Bandelier had the opportunity to join Valles Caldera National Preserve and Salinas Missions National Monument in a cohort of parks that were also beginning the strategic planning process. Joining this cohort allowed the three parks to engage with shared partners, state agencies, and affiliated Tribal Nations together, while creating a forum for sharing and candid feedback. The process also gave staff, partners, and stakeholders an opportunity to articulate to Bandelier's new superintendent their goals, expectations, and priorities for the monument over the next five years.

This plan was created by an interdisciplinary group of park employees representing the park's various work units and all levels of the organization. The group engaged with other park staff, cooperating state and local organizations, community groups, affiliated tribes, and other interested parties to determine and articulate what inherent values and resources endure at Bandelier National Monument; to identify and capture the current and future challenges that the park faces; and to craft a vision and a plan that will help guide management decisions over the next five years.

About Bandelier National Monument

Bandelier National Monument is a unit of the National Park Service located near Los Alamos, New Mexico. Bandelier contains one of the largest concentrations of pre-Hispanic archeological sites in the American Southwest and traditional cultural and religious sites that remain critical for 23 affiliated Tribal Nations. There are more than 3,000 known archeological sites dating from AD 1100 to 1550, consisting of large villages, small farming hamlets, cliff houses, and scatters of artifacts. Bandelier's Civilian Conservation Corps Historic District consists of 32 stone buildings that encompass one of the most significant historic districts of this period and has been designated as a National Historical Landmark. Bandelier is within the Pajarito Plateau, a large geographic feature composed of volcanic ash and lava flows ejected from the Valles Caldera. The monument contains deep canyons stretching to the Rio Grande and extends to the alpine summit of Cerro Grande at 10,200 feet. The varied climate zones provide habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna, including several threatened and endangered species. Bandelier's position in the transition zone of the high desert of the American Southwest has provided a unique environment where the rapid effects of climate change has been observed and studied.



Need for a Strategic Plan

In recent history Bandelier National Monument has been challenged to balance management and operations of the park with uncertain resources and unpredictable disruptions. The park has experienced increased complexity while maintaining a flat budget. A few examples of this increased complexity include:

- Las Conchas Fire of 2011
 - The fire burned two thirds of the park, including most of the higher-elevation areas, with a high percentage of severe burning in these areas
 - Immediate flooding threatened the Bandelier National Monument Visitor Center and key infrastructure
 - There were dramatic changes to watersheds/hydrology, vegetation, and fisheries
 - Most of the park's backcountry trails were lost or damaged due to flooding and downed trees
 - Park neighbors experienced significant losses (e.g., Santa Clara Pueblo, Cochiti Pueblo, City of Los Alamos, USFS)
 - Parts of the Falls Trail were destroyed, blocking access to Lower Falls and the Rio Grande
 - A Backcountry cabin was destroyed, impacting visitor and resource protection and resource management operations on the west side of the park
- Post-fire visitation has increased; a shuttle bus system was initiated to address parking lot capacities
- Visitor impacts to key resources are becoming better understood and more apparent
- There is greater demand and expectation for collaborative work with partners, including Tribes
- There has been increased collaboration with Valles Caldera National Preserve since 2015, when the unit was transferred to NPS
- 2021 Visitation: 271,556 (77,642 over 2011)
- FY 2021 budget: \$3,509,000 (\$222,000 over FY 11)
- FY 2021 FTE: 45 (27 less than 2011)
- Region revised Bandelier superintendent position description; Bandelier superintendent now supports Valles Caldera superintendent, formally linking the two units

The combination of new leadership, changing visitation, cumulative resource impacts, and overall increasing complexities has created a need to engage in strategic planning.

About the Strategic Planning Process

In 2021, Bandelier National Monument, Valles Caldera National Preserve, and Salinas Missions National Monument participated in a strategic planning course to learn the principles of strategic planning and how to facilitate a strategic planning process at each of the three parks. During the course, each of the parks applied what they learned by guiding a strategic action team through the process of creating their own strategic plan. Bandelier staff worked together to create a snapshot of the current state of the park, which led to discussions about the future direction of the park. The intended outcomes of the process included 1) a shared vision for the future of the park, 2) an actionable, comprehensive strategic action plan, and 3) increased understanding and collaboration among park staff.

All Bandelier staff was able to contribute to the plan throughout the process. Representatives from state and local governments, affiliated Tribal Nations, and community organizations contributed by answering detailed questions about their perceived greatest challenges and opportunities for Bandelier. They were provided an opportunity to review the draft plan and offer feedback for consideration before it was finalized.

Planning Model Used

Bandelier National Monument used the model below, developed and taught by New Line Consulting, to develop the components of its strategic action plan. This document will follow a similar format.



Enduring: Core Purpose and Values

This strategic action plan articulates Bandelier National Monument's core purpose and values to remind those executing the plan what matters to the park and why it exists so that future decisions and direction are aligned with these essentials that remain constant.

Purpose (why we do it)

The purpose of Bandelier National Monument is to protect, preserve, and interpret an outstanding portion of the Pajarito Plateau, including one of the largest concentrations of Ancestral Pueblo archeological sites in the American Southwest. The park provides opportunities for people to connect with and enjoy a diversity of cultural and natural resources, striking scenery, wildlife habitats, remnants of a volcanic landscape, and wilderness.



National Park Service Mission Statement

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

Core Values (*what matters to us*)

Core Values are enduring principles that the park stands for and that cannot be altered without compromising the basic identity of the unit. The core values adopted by park staff to carry out the unit mission are below and include a list of behaviors that represent those values in action.

Preservation: We ensure the highest level of protection for unique natural, traditional, and ancestral landscapes, cultural sites, and the tangible and intangible resources that encompass Pueblo history and culture, so they remain relevant not only to Pueblo People but to all people.

- Actively seek opportunities to improve our understanding of our connection to the culture and history of the park.
- Value the importance of using tribal resources and knowledge.
- Practice excellence in craftsmanship and prioritize authenticity over expediency.
- Be respectful of the cultural and historic significance of the resources as we engage in our work.



Cultural Connection - Inclusion: We embrace the relationship between the park and traditional affiliated Tribal Nations to ensure the unique ancestral, traditional, and contemporary values for each Tribe are honored, religious connections are cherished, and the heritage remains relevant and is preserved for the future.

- Respect the spiritual significance of the park.
- Ask, "Are the right people in the room and are we missing anyone?"
- Honor the voices of the past, listen to the voices of today, and plan for the voices of the future.

Meaningful Connections: We facilitate purposeful relationships between visitors and the unique natural and cultural stories that make up the past, present, and future of Bandelier to promote respect, appreciation, and stewardship.

- Consider and incorporate multiple perspectives to tell appropriate, relevant stories.

- Prioritize resource integrity and visitor experience— “Quality over Quantity.”
- Make room for ongoing staff learning to ensure we are connected to the park.
- Ask what meaningful connections look like and recognize that visitors find meaning in different ways.
- Think outside the box to consider new ways to connect with and experience the resources.

Natural Resources Stewardship: We employ scientific investigation to adaptively protect and manage the unique ecosystem of the Pajarito Plateau to safeguard its continued existence.

- Share research and data to promote learning and stewardship.
- Use existing information to guide our decision making.
- Reflect on the past before we move forward.
- Use the expertise of scientists and traditional land managers to guide priorities.

Vision for Change for Bandelier National Monument

*This vision for change is a proclamation of the desired future state of preservation and visitor experience. It provides guidance to NPS staff and partners in decision making related to the unit. This tells staff and partners **WHERE** they are leading the unit in the future.*

In 2027, Bandelier National Monument forges a new model for visitation and adaptive resource management built on understanding and honestly reckoning with the impact of humans on the sacred sites, traditions, and natural resources of the Pajarito Plateau.

How did we develop this vision statement? The description of the desired future state was developed by reflecting on the major components of an effective vision for change. It must be aligned with the unit’s identity, it must account for what is unique to this moment in history, and it must address the realities facing the unit. Participants identified the following components that were relevant to Bandelier’s vision for change:

Aligned with Identity (mission, purpose, values; what we do, why we do it, what we believe in)

Cultural Connections: The park’s deep connections, past and present, with affiliated Tribal groups.

Unique Natural & Cultural Resources: Wide diversity of natural resources and cultural sites.

Unique Moment in History

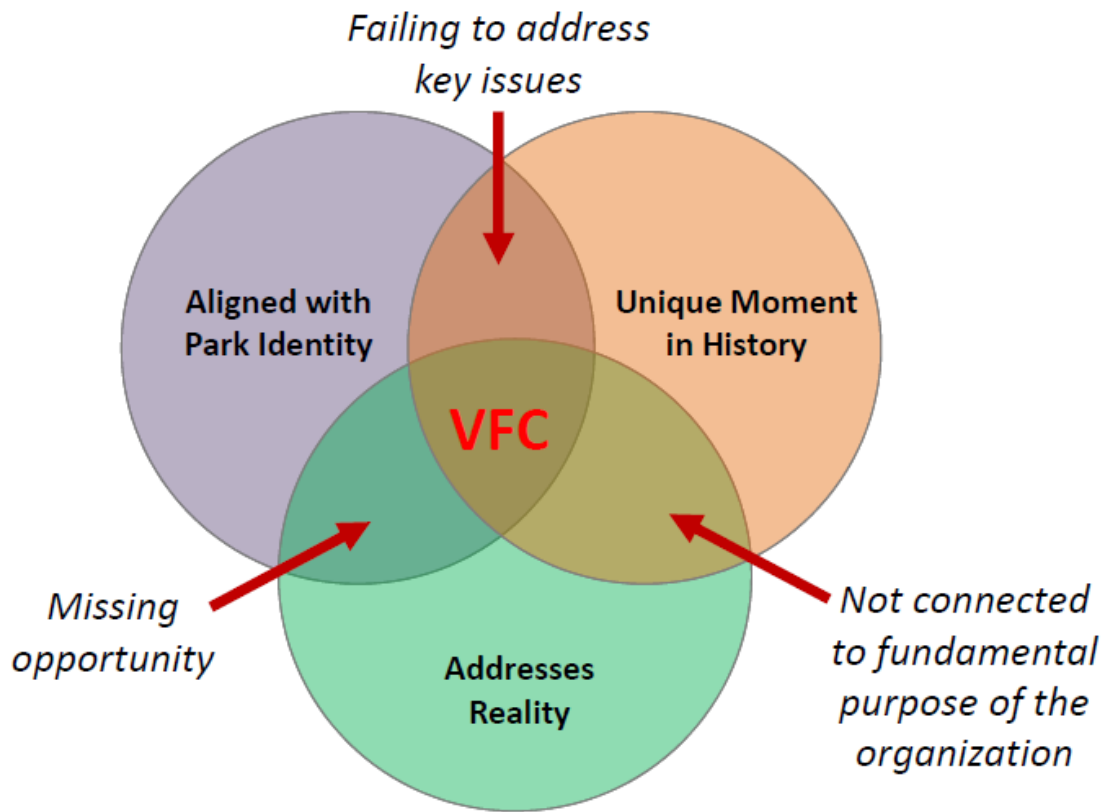
New Start Post-COVID: COVID-19 Pandemic provides momentum for change and opportunities to reevaluate how “we do business” while the public is expecting and accepting change.

New Park Superintendent: New superintendent brings fresh perspective to go along with a new park alignment with Valles Caldera National Preserve.

Address Reality

Increased Visitation: Higher levels of visitation are causing more resource degradation and are harming the visitor experience.

Employee Retention and Morale: Retaining high quality staff is difficult due to the local cost of living. Low staffing levels, inadequate for current visitation, is causing higher workloads and burn out.



Five-Year Goal for Bandelier National Monument

*This five-year goal is a specific, measurable goal that, should we achieve it as a unit, we believe we will realize our vision for change. This tells staff and partners **WHAT** they are going to do.*

A new Pajarito Plateau Trail Alliance offers a visitor experience centered on understanding human-caused changes to the resource, both natural and traditional, and how to resiliently manage resources in a rapidly changing climate.



Strategic Focus Areas for Bandelier National Monument

*Strategic focus areas are categories of work in which park staff and partners will invest time and resources over the next five years to achieve the park-wide goal. These can be thought of as the “battles we must win in order to win the war.” This tells staff and partners **HOW** to create the desired future.*



Strategic Focus Areas Breakdown

The following is a breakdown of how each strategic focus area will contribute to reaching the unit-wide five-year goal and realizing the vision.

STAFFING: *We will prioritize local recruitment and build a supportive work environment.*

- ▶ Primary Goal: Implement a comprehensive developmental program that will target local communities for recruitment for open positions and create opportunities for growth and advancement for existing staff.

PARTNERSHIPS (NON-TRIBAL): *We will grow and strengthen partnerships towards more cohesive management and expanded interpretation of the Pajarito Plateau.*

- ▶ Primary Goal: Establish an alliance with a minimum of five partners to coordinate the creation of the full Pajarito Plateau Trail experience.

TRIBAL COLLABORATION & ENGAGEMENT: *We will strengthen tribal relationships by expanding opportunities for openminded and transparent engagement.*

- ▶ Primary Goal: Establish a Tribal liaison position.

VISITOR MANAGEMENT & EXPERIENCE: *We will proactively and adaptively manage visitor use to protect the integrity of natural, cultural, and traditional resources while enhancing visitor experience.*

- ▶ Primary Goal: We will establish capacity limits for the Pueblo Loop Trail, Alcove House, and Tsankawi.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT: *We will take a holistic approach to land stewardship by making decisions based on science and traditional knowledge.*

- ▶ Primary Goal: Fully functional and integrated Research Learning Center.

How to Use this Document

Focus on Capacity

Bandelier National Monument is operating in a time of complex change and limited resources, and we commit to recognizing that staff need clear, achievable priorities. Be committed to continuously assessing our actual capacity and let go of projects, programs, and processes that are not essential to the mission and long-term goals. Consider prioritizing work using the following criteria:

Does the project, program, or activity:

- ✓ Achieve the fundamentals outlined in our enabling legislation
- ✓ Align with the park purpose, mission, and core values
- ✓ Align with and support the Vision for Change
- ✓ Support accomplishing the goals of the plan
- ✓ Consume manageable amounts of time, energy, and money
- ✓ Have a champion within the organization who has the time and attention required

Making This a Living Document

The BAND Strategic Action Team is committed to review progress, alignment, and to update the document to reflect current needs and conditions. Initially the team will convene every other month. Updates to the plan will be communicated with staff and partners.

Supporting Priorities Yearly Breakdown

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Staffing	<p>Revise park organizational chart</p> <p>Apply for operating funding increase</p> <p>Create local job posting network</p> <p>Submit/request waiver for permanent positions on FLREA funding</p>	<p>Establish career seasonal positions (secure funding & identify projects)</p> <p>Establish local job fairs with pueblos, UNM, etc.</p> <p>Secure funding for Pathways program (Five-year plan)</p> <p>Outline hiring authorities (Identify which ones require USAJobs and which don't)</p> <p>Identify hiring incentives</p> <p>Create bi-annual resume workshop</p> <p>Identify candidates from tribal work crews (Rocky Mountain Youth Core, self-governance agreements, etc.)</p>	<p>Pathways hiring program in place</p> <p>Formalize mentorship & job shadowing program for park employees</p> <p>Develop outline for park's recruitment and internal development plan</p>	<p>Establish bi-annual Individual Development Plan (IDP) and employee development workshop</p> <p>Hold two primary job fairs annually (Santa Fe, Albuquerque)</p> <p>Hold smaller localized (Los Alamos, pueblos) recruitment events as positions within park open</p> <p>Firm local hiring pathway in place (example: Rocky Mountain Youth Core – lower-graded position – Pathways – Permanent)</p>	<p>Complete recruitment and development plan</p>	<p><i>We have prioritized local recruitment and built a supportive work environment.</i></p> <p><u>Primary Goal Achieved:</u> Implement a comprehensive developmental program that targets local communities for recruitment for open positions and creates growth and developmental opportunities for existing staff.</p>
Partnerships (Non Tribal)	<p>Create quarterly "partner newsletter"</p> <p>Strengthen existing relationships into partnerships</p>	<p>Develop Pajarito Plateau Experience</p> <p>Present vision to potential partners</p> <p>Engage partners in long-range interpretive planning</p> <p>Regularly schedule meetings with partners</p> <p>Conduct outreach programs with schools/communities</p> <p>Define involvement with partners and develop committed partnerships</p>	<p>Draft Pajarito Plateau Experience partnership agreement</p> <p>Explore and identify "publication" options for Pajarito Plateau Experience interpretive product</p>	<p>Execute Pajarito Plateau Experience agreement with partners</p> <p>Work with partners to create and deliver Pajarito Plateau Experience product</p>	<p>Pajarito Plateau Experience interpretive media/product available that addresses common themes across all partners, as well as individual and unique themes</p>	<p><i>We have grown & strengthened partnerships towards more cohesive management and expanded interpretation of the Pajarito Plateau.</i></p> <p><u>Primary Goal Achieved:</u> Establish an alliance with a minimum of five partners to coordinate and create a full Pajarito Plateau experience.</p>

Tribal Collaboration & Engagement						<hr/>
Visitor Management & Experience	<p>Create positive public messaging to obtain buy-in on visitor management change</p> <p>Change visitor management of Alcove House</p> <p>Create temporary exhibit (climate change focus) to move into fire tower</p> <p>Explore feasibility of putting more on recreation.gov</p> <p>Evaluate shuttle operations</p>			<p>Explore making access to some sites through guided tour only (Fee recovery, expanded amenity fee?)</p> <p>Assess results of resource capacity study including consultation of results</p> <p>Propose and create visitor management plan</p> <p>Harden trails and resources in areas with high visitation</p> <p>Create plans for Tsankawi Ranger Station rehab/redesign</p>	<p>Implement and assess effectiveness of visitor management plan and adjust if needed</p> <p>Rehabilitate Tsankawi contact station</p> <p>Open new seasonal contact station at Tsankawi (with new Passport stamp!)</p>	<hr/>
Adaptive Management	<p>Establish roles, responsibilities, and goals for Research Learning Center (RLC)</p> <p>Hire permanent chief of resources</p>			Monitoring program established	RLC director/coordinator is part of Bandelier and Valles Caldera management teams	<hr/>

Forecast (Known Projects and commitments)	IT specialist vacancy Vacant fire management officer position LRF project (utilities) Thin and pile burn project on FR289 & Hwy 4 Visitor management of Alcove House Implementing Santa Clara agreement Adding new visitor and resource protection (VRP) position Resource management vacancies Alcove House bridges and retaining walls Tsankawi & Frey parking lots Roof replacements				Rehab historic gutters Construction – Phase 2 LRF (building Repair historic walkways (residential area) Stabilize Alcove House deposits Cerro Grande prescribed fire Thinning project – Tsankawi Thinning project – project areas 1, 5, 8 Visitor center bridge construction Construction – reestablish Falls Trail Construction – Paintbrush employee housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehab historic gutters • Construction – reestablish Falls Trail • Construction – Paintbrush employee housing