National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Superintendent's Compendium
Of Designations, Closures, Permit Requirements and Other Restrictions
Imposed Under Discretionary Authority

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El Morro National Monument

Approved:

Mitzi Frank Date: 8/20/14

Mitzi Frank, Superintendent

In accordance with regulations and the delegated authority provided in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations ("36 CFR"), Chapter 1, Parts 1-7, authorized by Title 16 United States Code, Section 3, the following regulatory provisions are established for the proper management, protection, and public use of those portions of El Morro National Monument under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS). Unless otherwise stated, these regulatory provisions apply in addition to the requirements contained in 36 CFR, Chapter 1, Parts 1-7.

In addition to these regulations, the following are also provided:

Written determinations, which explain the reasoning behind the Superintendent's use of discretionary authority, are required by Section 1.5(c) and appear in this document or as attached files contained in Appendix A. Appendix A documents are available for review in the Chief Ranger Office at El Malpais National Monument, 123 East Roosevelt Avenue, Grants, New Mexico as well as at the Law Enforcement Specialist's Office at El Morro National Monument.

Section 1.6(f) states that a list of those activities that require a permit must be maintained. That list appears in this document under 1.6.

As required by 1.7(b), these regulations, permit requirements, and written determinations shall be updated annually and made available to the public upon request.

PART 1 - GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1.4, Definitions

Camping - the erecting of a tent or shelter of natural, or synthetic material, preparing a sleeping bag or other bedding material for use, parking of a motor vehicle, motor home or trailer for the apparent purpose of overnight occupancy

Climbing - Ascending or descending rocks or boulders with or without the aid of any equipment including, but not limited to, ropes, anchors, bolts, picks, pitons and related equipment.

Contained Fire - A fire kindled in an established fire grate or in a portable fire/cooking container that serves to contain all flame, fuel, ash and debris from all contact with the ground or other materials outside the container. This includes propane cook stoves, barbeque grills, sterno stoves and other such approved devices.

El Morro National Monument Visitor Center Complex - All of the buildings and surrounding courtyard area, supplies, materials and infrastructure in the general location of the El Morro National Monument Visitor Center located south of mile 44.6, Highway 53, approximately 12 miles east of Ramah, New Mexico. This includes the entrance road, parking areas, and all other associated infrastructure.

Memorialization: The placement of a monument, memorial, tablet, structure, other commemorative installation, or the scattering of human remains,

Pack animal - Horses, burros, mules, other hoofed mammals, and llamas.

Park Road - Park road means the main-traveled surface of a roadway open to motor vehicles, owned, controlled or otherwise administered by the National Park Service.

Picnic - An excursion or outing with food usually provided by members of the group and eaten in the open; also: the food provided for a picnic.

Special Park Uses - As defined by Director's Order 53 a "special park use" is:

A short-term activity that takes place in a park area and:

- Provides a benefit to an individual, group, or organization, rather than the public at large.
- Requires written authorization and some degree of management control from the NPS in order to protect park resources and the public interest.
- Is not prohibited by law or regulation.
- And is neither initiated, sponsored, nor conducted by the NPS.

Unmanned Aircraft – A device that is used or intended to be used for flight in the air without the possibility of direct human intervention from within or on the device, and the associated operational elements and components that are required for the pilot or system operator in command to operate or control the device (such as cameras, sensors, communication links). This term includes all types of devices that meet this definition (e.g., model airplanes, quadcopters, drones) that are used for any purpose, including for recreation or commerce.

Section 1.5., Closure and Public Use Limits

The following public use limits are established for all or for the listed portions of the monument, and the following closures are established for all or a portion of the park to all public use or to a certain use or activity:

General Public Access: Access to El Morro National Monument is limited to the visitor center, Inscription Loop Trail and Headland Trail, picnic area, campground, administrative areas and entrance road during established park hours as well as while traveling non-stop across the section of New Mexico Highway 53 Right Of Way within the monument boundaries.

Visitor use is limited to the developed trail system within the monument during standard hours of operation: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm during the winter season; and from 8:00 am to 7:00 pm in the summer season, or as posted seasonally at the monument's visitor center and entrance signs.

All portions of the Inscription and Headland Trails are closed from 4:00 pm to 9:00 am during the winter season;

and from 6:00 pm to 8:00 am in the summer season, or as posted seasonally at the monument's visitor center and entrance signs.

Public vehicle access and traffic to El Morro National Monument is limited to designated parking areas and established, paved roadways.

Those utilizing the picnic area located directly north of the El Morro National Monument visitor center are required to remain on the graveled area adjacent to that picnic area.

Determination: All visitors to El Morro National Monument must initially pass through the visitor center contact area in order to pay the entrance fee, and to be informed of the significance of the monument, the sensitivity of natural and cultural resources, and applicable resource-related regulations. Travelling on foot or by vehicle through closed areas will result in damage or disturbance to sensitive natural and cultural resources.

Temporary Trail Closures: Both the Inscription Loop Trail and/or the Headland Trail may be closed on a temporary basis due to adverse environmental conditions.

Determination: Conditions for temporary closure of the trails may include snow, ice, high winds, thunderstorms and lightning, presence of potentially hazardous wildlife, fire danger, or when there is a danger of rock-fall. It may also be necessary to close the trails during major maintenance and preservation activities.

Employee Residence Area: Access to the employee residence area is restricted to employees and their designated guests or authorized contractors.

Determination: Due to the remote nature of El Morro National Monument and because of the need for expanded vigilance over its fragile resources, is has been deemed necessary to house employees within a NPS residence area contained within the monument's boundaries. In the interest of maintaining the privacy and safety of these employees, public visitation to this area is prohibited.

Rock Climbing: Climbing is prohibited anywhere within the monument.

Determination: Inscription Rock is composed primarily of Zuni Sandstone, which by its nature is extremely fragile, brittle, highly fractured, and is not considered compatible with public climbing activities. Climbing activities would place those involved (as well as those utilizing the trails directly below the cliff faces) at high risk of personal injury or death since vertical surfaces of Zuni Sandstone could fail under the weight of a climber. Climbing will also damage the rock surfaces and potentially threaten the irreplaceable inscriptions for which the monument was established.

Segway or Similar Device Use: The use of Segway or similar personal transportation devices by mobility impaired persons will be permitted under the following conditions:

A. The operation of the Segway will be limited to the following locations:
- The interior spaces of the El Morro National Monument visitor center normally accessible to the public.
- El Morro National Monument visitor center restroom facilities.
- The Inscription Loop Trail proceeding around the east side of the visitor center entrance doors on the paved handicap accessible detour path, to the Inscription Loop Trail junction (where the operator will bear to the right and follow the trail in a counter-clockwise fashion). From this trail junction the operator will proceed northeast continuing on the path, continuing in a counter-clockwise fashion, and will proceed past the junction to the Headland Trail. From that location the Segway operator will continue to the Historic El Morro pool where further operation of the Segway will cease (due to the steep grade encountered immediately past this location), and will return to the visitor center by following their original route in reverse.
- Publicly accessible paved roads or graveled campsite areas including the main parking lot and adjacent public picnic area.

B. The operator of the Segway will:
- Provide authenticated documentation to staff upon initial entry at the visitor center, such as, a note from physician, handicap vehicle registration, or National Park Service Golden Access Card to help verify the operator's status as mobility impaired.

- Wear an approved safety helmet. Segway recommends that riders wear a multi-impact helmet and there is a specific ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) standard for Segway helmets. A commonly manufactured bicycle-style helmet will meet this requirement.
- Yield the right of way to all pedestrians at all times.
- Maintain their Segway on the paved trail surface at all times.
- Not be operated at a speed exceeding 4 miles per hour (the speed of a brisk walking pace) at any time.
- Utilize extreme caution on all inclined areas of the trail, particularly when returning along their original route from the area of the historic El Morro pool back to the visitor center, where downhill grades and winding sections of the path will be encountered.
- Be prominently marked with an international "wheelchair" type, blue and white handicapped symbol.

Determination: Due to concentrated public visitation, varied topography and potentially congested or confined trail conditions encountered at El Morro National Monument Segway use is limited to certain areas of the monument, generally those accessible to regular and motorized wheelchairs.

Use of the Segway is specifically prohibited from use on any portion of the Headland Trail at El Morro National Monument due to the presence of numerous stairs, 200 foot drop offs, narrow and irregular trail surfaces and steep switchbacks.

Unmanned Aircraft: The launching, landing, or operating an unmanned aircraft from or on lands and waters administered by the National Park Service within the boundaries of El Morro National Monument is prohibited except as approved in writing by the superintendent.

Determination: The use of unmanned aircraft is a new form of use within the National Park Service, El Morro National Monument. It has been determined by the National Park Service that the use of unmanned aircraft has the potential to cause unacceptable impacts such as harming visitors, interfering with rescue operations, causing excessive noise, impacting viewsheds, and disturbing wildlife, to name a few. Until all impacts can be properly evaluated it is in the best interest of El Malpais National Monument to not allow the use of the unmanned aircraft. If El Morro NM allowed the use of the unmanned aircraft before proper evaluation it could result in unacceptable impacts to park resources, park values and visitor safety. This will be an interim measure unless a less restrictive measure will not suffice, and then the closure will be permanent.

Section 1.6 (f), Permits

In compliance with 36 CFR 1.6(f), the following are activities requiring a special use permit through the Superintendent:

- After hours visitation or use, Section 1.5
- Gathering of plant products, Section 2.1 (c)(1)
- Carry or possess weapons in a federal facility, including the Visitor Center Complex, Section 2.4 (d)
- Camping, Section 2.10
- Specimen collection, Section 2.5
- Explosives, Section 2.38
- Special Events, Section 2.50
- Public assemblies, Meetings, Section 2.51
- Sale or Distribution of Printed matter, Section 2.52
- Operating a motor vehicle off designated roads, Section 4.10 (a)
- Driving or parking off a designated road, Section 4.10 (a)
- Commercial filming or photography, Section 5.5 (a) and (b)
- Use of commercial vehicles on park area road, Section 5.6 (c)

PART 2 – RESOURCE PROTECTION, PUBLIC USE AND RECREATION

Section 2.1, Preservation of Natural, Cultural and Archeological Resources

Subsection 2.1 (a)(4): The collection of dead and down wood is prohibited anywhere in the Monument

Subsection 2.1 (b): All the following are prohibited:

- All public pedestrian use is restricted at all times to the Inscription Loop Trail and Headland Trail, the visitor center, campground, picnic area, and the paved, established roadways. Leaving an established trail at any time or to shortcut between portions of trail is prohibited.
- Visitation to undeveloped areas or after-hours visitation may only occur with written permission of the Superintendent.
- Direct pedestrian access to El Morro National Monument lands from New Mexico Highway 53, the entrance road and the campground is prohibited. All public pedestrian access will be routed along the entrance road and through the Visitor Center complex.
- The following archeological sites and historic resources are open to the public, as viewed from existing, maintained trails and during posted visitation hours:
    - Inscriptions along the Inscription Loop Trail (stops numbered 1 to 23)
    - Atsinna Pueblo, on the Headland Trail
- All other archeological sites are closed to the public.

Subsection 2.1 (c)(1): The gathering of any plant product or part such as fruits, berries, nuts, seeds, and mushrooms is prohibited. A permit is required for Native American's to collect plant products for tribal use.

Determination: The historic and archeological sites listed above are open to viewing by the public. These sites are identified in the El Morro National Monument Resource Management Plan as being open to viewing by the public since they are 1) the primary cultural resources for which the monument was established; 2) adequately protected by allowing visitors to view them from a distance that does not threaten the sites themselves; 3) well documented and monitored regularly; and, 4) (in the case of Atsinna Pueblo) have been previously modified by visitor impacts or stabilization efforts.

The undeveloped areas outside of the established roads, trail system and physical structures of El Morro National Monument contain numerous and relatively pristine archeological resources and sensitive cryptobiotic soils. Unrestricted travel by either foot or vehicle is likely to unacceptably impact such fragile resources.

There are numerous documented cases on file where archeological resources have been illegally removed from their original locations or disturbed within the boundaries of El Morro National Monument by those walking off-trail through these dense archeological sites. Such disturbance or removal of artifacts damages the otherwise virtually intact archeological record and constitutes disruption to the prehistoric timeline represented at El Morro National Monument.

Section 2.2, Wildlife Protection

Subsection 2.2 (e): The use of artificial light sources (such as spotlighting) to deliberately illuminate or view wildlife including night vision, infrared, thermal imaging, or ultra-violet (black light) devices of any kind are prohibited, unless the Superintendent has issued a permit to specifically engage in such activities.

Determination: Hunting or taking of any wildlife is prohibited by 36 CFR. Activities such as spotlighting or intentionally illuminating wildlife represent deliberate actions that cause significant disturbance to wildlife and are often associated with the illegal taking (poaching) of wildlife.

Subsection 2.3: Fishing is prohibited in the historic El Morro pool.

Determination: Fish have not historically been a portion of the pool's ecosystem. The introduction of fish, fish bait, and/or worms into this ecosystem, will harm the delicate balance of life in this pool.

Section 2.10 Camping

Subsection 2.10 (a): The following establish the conditions for camping:

- Overnight camping within the boundaries of the monument is restricted to the established campground.
- All campsites are available on a first come, first served basis, unless specifically authorized by the Superintendent.
- All campsites are for the express use of fee-paying, legitimate campers. Loitering and other non-camping related use is prohibited, unless specifically authorized by the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent may designate sites or areas, and establish conditions for camping. Campers are restricted to not more than two (2) vehicles per campsite and not more than twelve (12) people per campsite.
- Tents will be restricted to the actual confines of each campsite.
- Those using the El Morro National Monument campground are required to remain within a distance of 150 feet from the campground loop road.
- Camping by any person, party or organization during any calendar year shall not exceed 14 days, either in a single period or combined separate times.
- The length limit on all recreational vehicles utilizing campsites will be 27 feet overall, measured from bumper to bumper.

Determination: The campground at El Morro National Monument is quite small (nine sites total) and receives significant yearly visitation. Damage to the surrounding natural and cultural resources is likely to result if camper movement and use is not restricted to specifically developed and designated areas. The design of the campground site pullouts will not practically or safely accommodate recreational vehicles longer than 27 feet without damaging adjacent resources or creating a traffic hazard.

Subsection 2.10 (b)(4): Quiet hours in the El Morro National Monument will be maintained between the hours of 10:00 PM (2200 hours) and 6:00 AM (0600 hours). During these periods, the following are prohibited:

- The operation of an electrical generator.
- Or creating unreasonable noise that would impact on park users.

Determination: El Morro National Monument's tranquility and natural sounds contribute to the experience of camping. Unreasonable human-caused noise intrudes on this unique resource, detracts from the visitor experience, and could disrupt natural wildlife behavior.

Subsection 2.10 (b)(7): The filling of any water containers, tanks, or trailers at any water source at the El Morro National Monument campground for domestic or commercial use external to the boundaries of El Morro National Monument is prohibited.

Determination: The domestic water supply at the El Morro National Monument Campground is intended for use by visitors immediately utilizing park facilities. This water supply is limited in capacity and is not designed or intended for unrestricted use by those residing outside the monument. Private utilization of the water system may also result in a potentially hazardous back-flow of tainted water from unsanitary drums, water tanks, or trailers resulting in the widespread contamination of the monument's water system.

Subsection 2.10 (d): Food, dishes, items with a scent, and trash will be stored in vehicles unless they are being actively used to prepare a meal.

Determination: Wildlife will seek food and scented items as food if left out in the campsites. This disrupts the foraging abilities of wildlife, trains wildlife to be depended on this food source, and can make the wildlife ill. Wildlife that becomes dependant on human food can become very aggressive in order to get the food and thus is also a danger to visitors.

Section 2.11, Picnicking

Picnicking (i.e. non/camping, day use) is limited to the picnic tables and associated areas directly adjacent to the RV/bus parking lot, north of the Visitor Center complex.

Visitors wishing to carry and consume food on the trail system must carry out all uneaten food and associated trash for disposal in an appropriate trash receptacle.

Determination: Trash receptacles are not provided along the trail system. Food and other trash not properly disposed of will disfigure the landscape and may encourage nuisance and/or hazardous wildlife behavior.

Section 2.12, Audio Disturbances

Any private or commercial vehicle will not idle for more that 10 minutes in the El Morro Visitor Center parking areas and large vehicle parking areas adjacent to the Visitor Center parking area.

Determination: The auditory disturbance caused by idling motor vehicles is incompatible with the natural quiet encountered at El Morro National Monument.

Section 2.13, Fires

Subsection 2.13 (a)(1): All fires must be contained inside the established, contained fire grills or pits located in the picnic area or campground. Ground fires are prohibited. Fires must not be left unattended. Fires must be completely extinguished before departure of campfire.

Subsection 2.13 (c): During periods of Very High or Extreme fire danger, as determined by El Malpais National Monument Fire Management Officer, any open fires, wood or otherwise, and the use of charcoal are prohibited. Under conditions of Very High or Extreme fire danger, self-contained gas grills, or stoves are allowed for use in the picnic area and campground.

Determination: El Morro National Monument contains seasonally flammable plant communities such as grasslands, dense stands of pinon/juniper trees and ponderosa pines. Ground fires and open fires outside of the developed fire pits in the campground create an undue risk of wildfire that would put the visiting public, park neighbors, staff, and resources in jeopardy.

Section 2.14, Sanitation and refuse

Subsection 2.14 (a)(2): Disposal of household refuse, other than that generated by NPS residents, is prohibited.

Subsection 2.14 (a)(4): Draining of refuse from trailer or other vehicles is prohibited.

Subsection 2.14 (a)(8): The disposal of human body waste is restricted to developed restrooms at the Visitor Center and Campground.

Determination: Due to heavy public use, all human waste will be properly disposed of in restrooms provided by the National Park Service, otherwise highly unsanitary conditions would prevail that would potentially detract from a safe, healthy, and positive visitor experience. Such conditions are not compatible with the recreational activities and opportunities available at El Morro National Monument.

Section 2.15, Pets

Subsection 2.15 (a)(1): Pets are allowed on the Inscription Loop and Headland Trails provided they are on a leash, which shall not exceed 6 feet in length, and under physical control at all times. Pets are prohibited from drinking water from or entering the water of the historic El Morro pool at all times. Pets are not allowed in the Visitor Center. Service animals are exempted from this section, however, are still not allowed in the historic El Morro pool.

Subsection 2.15 (a)(3): Pets are not to be left unattended, in a vehicle or tied to an object, at any time.

Subsection 2.15 (a)(5): Owners or persons having custody or control of any animal(s) will immediately remove and dispose of excrement voided by an animal(s) under their control. Excrement will be disposed of in trash containers.

Determination: Unrestrained pets are likely to cause resource damage or possibly threaten visitors when encountered within the relatively close confines of the Monument's trail system. Large animals such as mountain lions and black bears are occasionally found in the monument that could easily injure or kill pets or their owners. Diseases carried by pets can have adverse effect on wildlife. Interaction with pets can cause wildlife to change daily patterns.

The historic El Morro pool is a sensitive cultural and natural resource and could be adversely impacted by the entrance of household pets.

Section 2.16 (a), Horses and Pack Animals

Horses and other pack animals are prohibited within the boundaries of the monument except when used for park operations or interpretive demonstrations, or approved by the Superintendent for special purposes.

Determination: Horses and other pack animals may cause long-term resource damage during their passage on soft soils or while grazing on native plants. Manure from these animals may contain seeds from exotic plant species and noxious weeds that will spread, causing disruption to the natural ecosystem. Horses and other pack animals travelling in closed areas may also trample and damage sensitive archeological resources.

Section 2.20, Skating, Skateboards and Similar Devices

The use of roller-skates, in-line skates, skateboards, and similar devices is prohibited.

Determination: The steep terrain encountered on the trail system at El Morro National Monument precludes the safe use of roller-skates, in-line skates, skateboards, and similar devices.

Section 2.21, Smoking

Smoking is prohibited on all monument trails and in government buildings. During periods of Very High or Extreme fire danger, as determined by El Malpais National Monument Fire Management Officer, smoking will be prohibited throughout the monument, unless you are inside your vehicle or government housing unit.

Determination: The potential of improper disposal of cigarette butts can lead to negative effects on the natural and cultural resources of the Monument as well as the visitor's experience. The presence of burning smoking materials of any type represents a fire risk during periods of elevated fire danger.

Section 2.23, Fees

Entrance fees will be charged at El Morro National Monument all year except on Public Lands Day. The superintendent may designate other days with special events as fee free days.

Camping fees will be charged at the monument during the spring, summer, and fall seasons when water is available in the campground.

Determination: El Morro National Monument is a designated fee area.

Section 2.35, Alcoholic Beverages and Controlled Substances

Subsection 2.35 (a)(3)(i): The consumption of alcoholic beverages or the possession of an open container of an alcoholic beverage on the Inscription Loop Trail, the Headland Trail, and inside the buildings of the Visitor Center Complex is prohibited. The consumption of alcoholic beverages and the possession of an open container of an alcoholic beverage is allowed within the other areas of the Monument.

Determination: The consumption of alcoholic beverages on the trail system is an inappropriate activity considering the historic and culturally sensitive nature of the location, the purposes for which the area is maintained, the steep and irregular trail surfaces, sheer drop-offs of approximately 200 feet, and general public safety.

Section 2.38 (b), Explosives

Using or possessing fireworks, firecrackers or other explosives devices is prohibited.

Determination: Using or possessing fireworks, firecrackers or other explosives devices is inherently hazardous, constitutes a fire hazard, and is not appropriate within a heavily visited protected natural and cultural resource.

Section 2.51 Designated First Amendment/Public Assembly Location

The area adjoining the picnic table on the southern side of the El Morro National Monument parking area, closest to the visitor center is designated as the First Amendment/Public Assembly Location.

Section 2.52 Sale or Distribution of Printed Matter Location

The area adjoining the picnic table on the southern side of the El Morro National Monument parking area, closest to the visitor center is designated as the location for the Sale or Distribution of Printed Matter.

Section 2.62, Memorialization

Subsection 2.62 (a): The placement of memorials is prohibited.

Determination: The placement of memorials poses the potential to cause damage to sensitive natural, archeological, and cultural resources. Increased human activity at such areas may promote adverse effects such as ground compaction, disruption to vehicle traffic flow, damage, or disturbance of archeological or historic heritage sites, and interference with normal patterns of wildlife behavior or movement.

Subsection 2.62 (b): The scattering of human ashes from cremation is prohibited, unless related to an authorized NAGPRA activity.

Determination: The scattering of human remains or ashes create profound and negative consequence within many traditional Native American cultures and belief systems. Numerous Native American tribes claim affiliation to the areas encompassed by El Morro National Monument and will strenuously object to the placement of any type of human remains, regardless of condition within these lands. Scattered modern remains will affect El Morro National Monument's ability to research, preserve and protection ancient remains.

PART 3 – BOATING AND WATER USE ACTIVITIES

Section 3.16, Swimming

Swimming in the historic El Morro pool is prohibited.

Determination: The Historic El Morro Pool is a sensitive cultural and natural resource and is not an appropriate location for a recreational use, such as swimming.

PART 4 – VEHICLE AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

Section 4.21, Speed Limits

Speed limits on monument roads are as follows:

- Highway 53: 55 miles per hour
- Entrance Road from Highway 53 to Service Access Road: 35 miles per hour
- Service Access Road: 25 miles per hour
- Entrance Road from Service Access Road to Visitor Center Complex: 15 miles per hour
- Employee Housing Area: 15 miles per hour
- Campground Road: 15 miles per hour
- All parking areas: 15 miles per hour

Determination: Vehicle speed on monument roads is regulated to protect public safety and to enhance the visitor experience. Roads in the monument are narrow, seasonally congested, and slower speeds ensure that drivers and pedestrians are able to see each other at a safe distance.

Section 4.30, Bicycles

Bicycles are prohibited on trails.

Determination: The steep terrain and volume of pedestrian traffic encountered on the trail system at El Morro National Monument precludes the safe use of bicycles and similar devices.

Section 4.31, Hitchhiking

Hitchhiking is prohibited on all roadways within El Morro National Monument in accordance with applicable New Mexico State Law.

Determination: Compliance with New Mexico State Traffic Statute 66-7-340 – Pedestrians soliciting rides or business.