

# MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

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National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the  
Interior

## Superintendent's Compendium 2026: Designations, Closures, Permit Requirements and Other Restrictions Imposed Under Discretionary Authority

In accordance with applicable law and policy, and pursuant to the delegated authorities provided in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR), Chapter 1, the following compendium actions apply to all lands and waters administered by the National Park Service (NPS) within the boundaries of Mesa Verde National Park. This document is the written compilation of designations, closures, permit requirements and other restrictions imposed under the discretionary authority of the Superintendent, as required by 36 CFR 1.7 (b). Violating any provision in this Compendium may result in criminal penalties under 36 CFR 1.3.

The compendium actions in this document apply in addition to

Written determinations, which explain the reasoning behind the Superintendent's use of discretionary authority, as required by Section 1.5(c), appear in this document as italicized print.

Approved by:

KATHRYN  
COLLINS

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Kayci Cook Collins, Superintendent

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Date

### I. 36 CFR §1.5 – VISITING HOURS, PUBLIC USE LIMITS, CLOSURES, AND AREA DESIGNATIONS FOR SPECIFIC USE OR ACTIVITIES

**(a)(1) The following visiting hours and public use limits are established for all or for the listed portions of the park, 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:**

#### Visiting Hours:

- **Visitor and Research Center and parking area:** Visiting hours for public use of the Visitor and Research Center are 0830 to 1600 hours (8:30am to 4:00pm). Specific hours for a season or day will be posted on the Visitor and Research Center's entrance sign and confirmed by the open or closed position of the gate. The hours will also be posted on the Mesa Verde National Park website. A permit from the Superintendent may authorize other

public uses of this facility and area. This area and the Visitor and Research Center will be closed on Thanksgiving Day, December 25, and January 1.

- **Mesa Verde Museum:** Visiting hours for public use of the Mesa Verde Museum are between 0830 to 1630 hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm) from May to October, and 1000 to 1500 hours (10:00am to 3:00pm) from October to May. Specific hours for a season will be posted on the sign next to the main entrance and will be confirmed by the open or closed and locked door. The hours will also be posted on the Mesa Verde National Park website. A permit from the Superintendent may authorize other public uses of this facility. This building will be closed on Thanksgiving Day, December 25, and January 1.
- **Wetherill Mesa Road and Area:** The Wetherill Mesa area is open from mid-to-late May to October, with roadway access from 0830 to 1600 hours (8:30 am to 4:00 pm) Specific hours will be posted at the entrance to the Wetherill Mesa Road, which is 12 miles from the Far View Lodge area and will be confirmed by the open or closed locked gate. Step House is within the Wetherill Area and is open from 0900 to 1530 hours (9:00 am to 3:30 pm). The hours will also be posted on the Mesa Verde National Park website.
- **Roadways:** Visiting hours for the following roadways are from sunrise to sunset, unless otherwise authorized by a NPS program or a permit from the Superintendent.
  - Mesa Top Loop Road
  - Cliff Palace Loop Road
  - Cedar Tree Tower Road and Trail
  - Far View Road and Trails
- **Hiking trails:** Visiting hours are from sunrise to sunset and limited to the developed trail system within Mesa Verde National Park. All off trail hiking is prohibited.

***Determination:** Visiting hours assists with the protection of the governmental buildings while closed. Visitors are encouraged to visit during business hours to be informed of the significance of the park, the sensitivity of natural and cultural resources, and applicable resource-related regulations. Roadway visiting hours assists with the protection of the cultural resources along the roads. As per 36 CFR 7.39 (a) and (b) all cultural resource sites and trails are only open during daylight hours.*

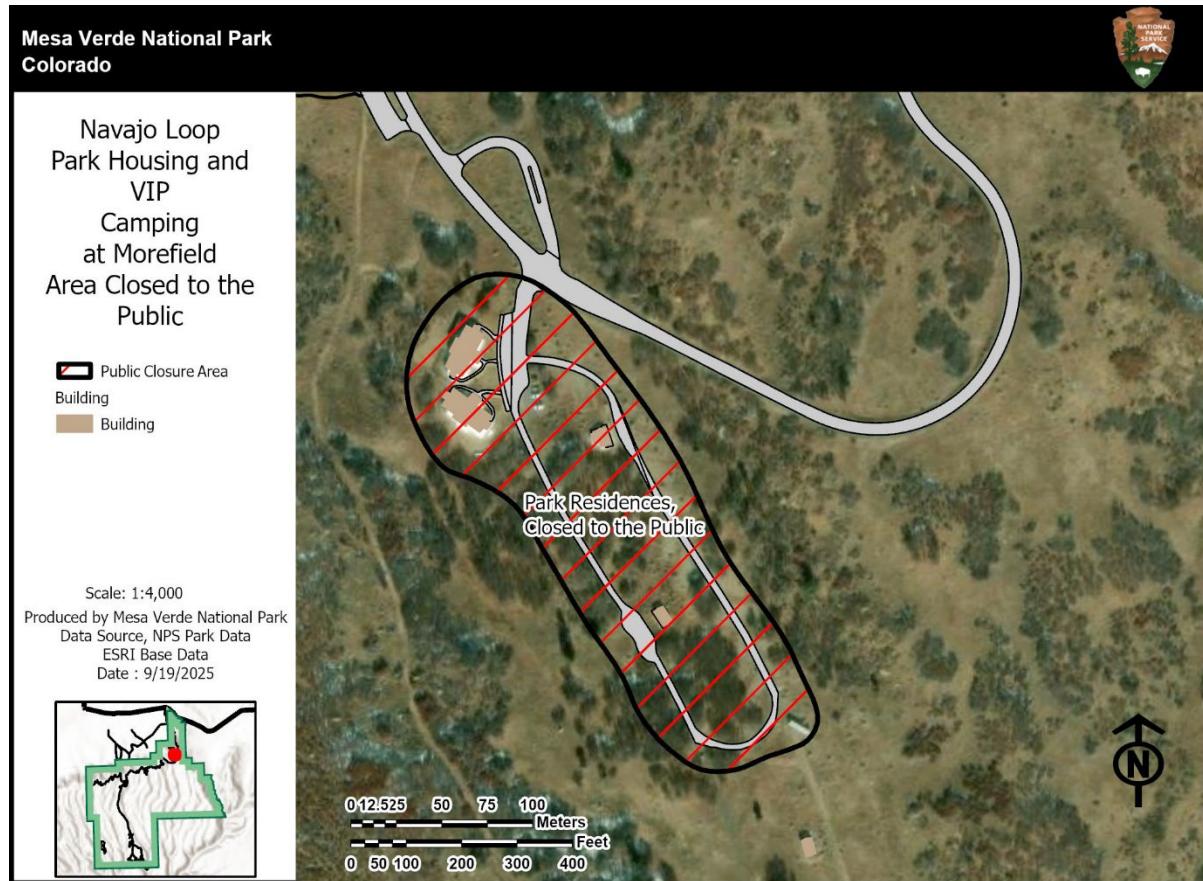
#### **Public Use Limits:**

- **Recreation sites:** The following sites are subject to limits and are defined below. To maintain the public use limits, the park will use permits. These permits will consist of educational permits, tickets, research permits and site access permits. Educational, research and site access permits will be managed through the appropriate program manager and tickets will be sold using the rec.gov website. The sites are generally open between April and October.
  - **Cliff Palace:** Visitation within the site is limited to 50 people per group.
  - **Balcony House:** Visitation within the site is limited to 40 people per group.
  - **Long House:** Visitation within the site is limited to 40 people per group.
  - **Seasonal site access:** In addition to the sites listed above, tours may also be offered at one or more of the sites listed below. These sites are selected each year before the main visitor season. Visitation to these is limited to 12 people per group. Starting in April the tours will be offered in a limited capacity and posted on the website and reservable through Rec.gov. Sites that could be offered are the following:
    - **Square Tower House**
    - **Spring House**
    - **Mug House**
    - **Oak Tree House**

**Determination:** As per 36 CFR 7.39 (a) the visitation to the above listed cultural sites requires the presence of a park ranger. The presence of park staff as guides or hosts reduces the potential for damage to the sites and for visitor accidents and injuries. Tour size and daily visitor limits are set for site protection and visitor safety.

**Closures:**

- **Employee Residence Areas:** Access to the employee residence areas is restricted to employees, the employee's family members and their designated guests or authorized contractors.



Mesa Verde National Park  
Colorado

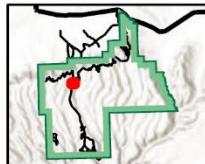


Far View  
Park Housing  
Area Closed to the  
Public

- Public Closure Area
- ✳ Designated Location
- 🍴 Food Service
- 🅿️ Parking
- Building
- Building

Scale: 1:4,000

Produced by Mesa Verde National Park  
Data Source, NPS Park Data  
ESRI Base Data  
Date : 9/19/2025



Mesa Verde National Park  
Colorado

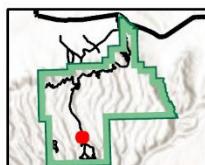


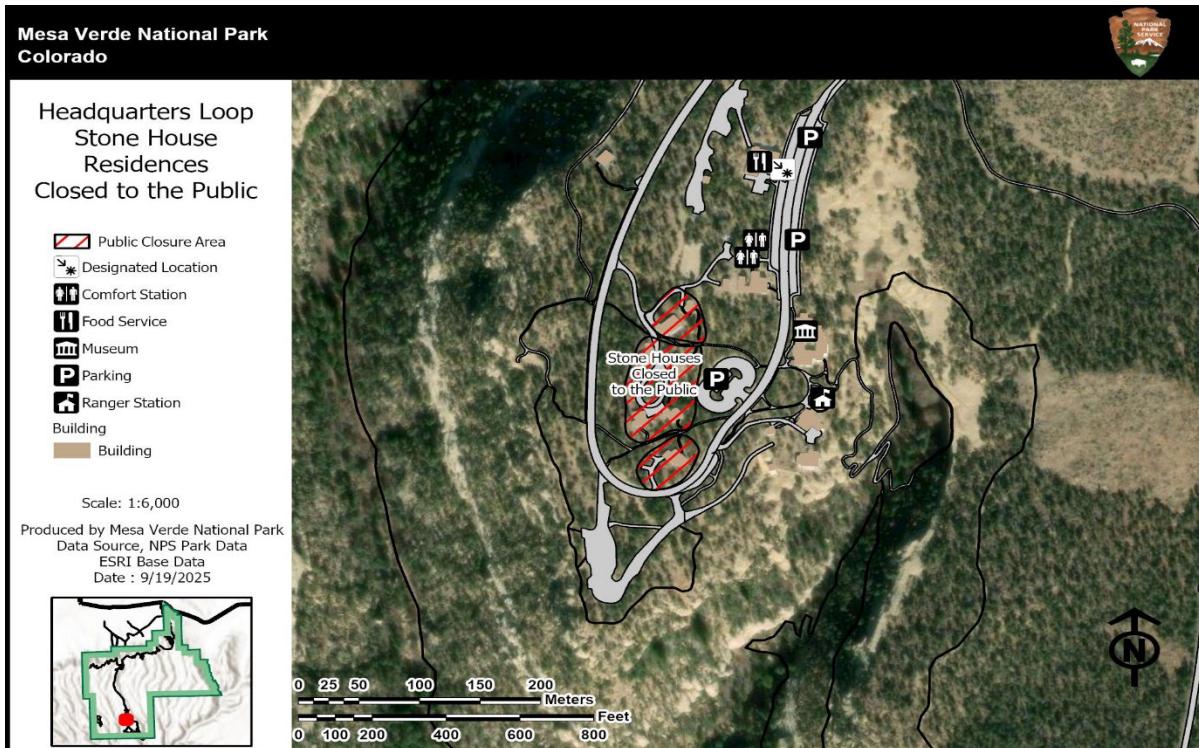
White House Loop  
Park Housing &  
Maintenance Yard  
Area Closed to the  
Public

- Public Closure Area
- Building
- Building
- Roads and Trails

Scale: 1:4,000

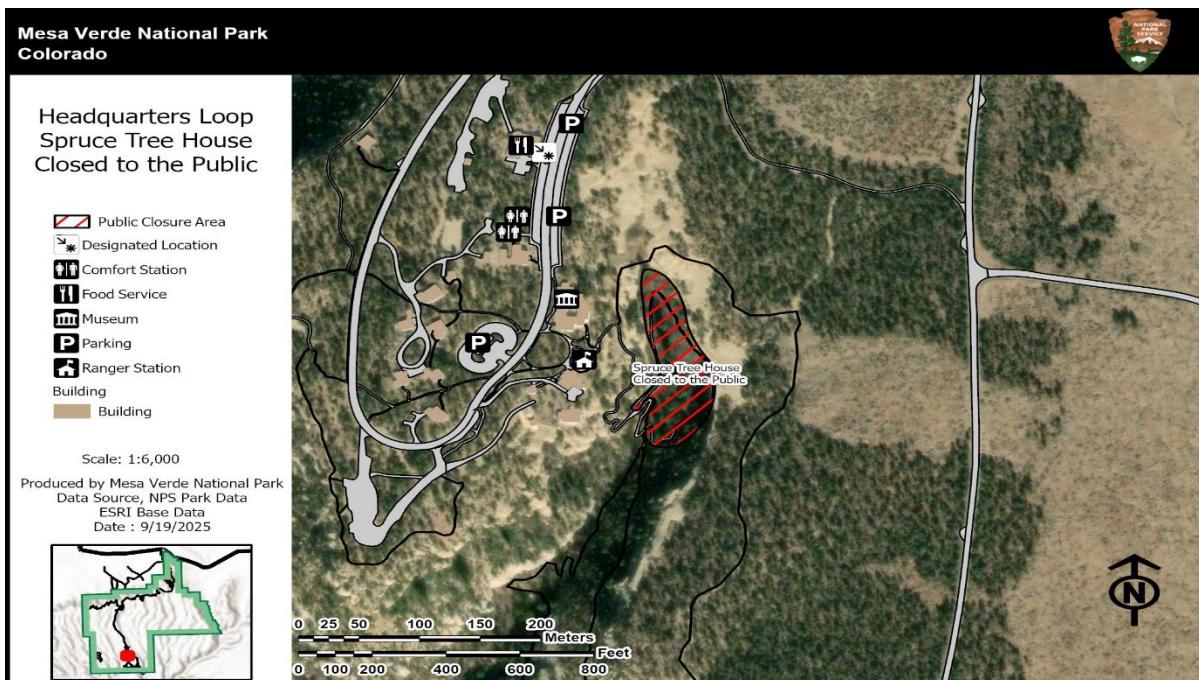
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Data Source, NPS Park Data  
ESRI Base Data  
Date : 9/19/2025





**Determination:** Due to the remote nature of Mesa Verde National Park and because of the need for expanded vigilance over its fragile resources, it has been deemed necessary to house employees within five NPS residence areas contained within the Park's boundaries. In the interest of maintaining the privacy and safety of these employees, public visitation to this area is prohibited.

- **Spruce Tree House and trail:** Access to the Spruce Tree House site and trail is closed to visitation except for very limited administrative activities.



**Determination:** Due to rockfall and instability of the site, the Spruce Tree site is closed to all visitation except those administrative visits that have to do with the protection of the location. Once the area is stabilized the site will open.

- **Trailers and towed vehicles:** Access beyond the Morefield Campground area is prohibited for visitor trailers and towed vehicles and is restricted to administrative and employee activities only.

**Determination:** Due to the narrow winding roadways and lack of adequate parking, we need to limit the trailers and towed vehicles to administrative activities and to employees within housing. No visitor trailers or towed vehicles will be allowed.

- **Tunnel access:** Access to the tunnel is limited to vehicle traffic only and is prohibited to pedestrians. Bicycles/eBikes are required to have a headlight and reflective lights located at the back to ensure that they can be seen when in the tunnel.

**Determination:** Due to the narrow road, darkness of the tunnel, and no sidewalk, the tunnel is a dangerous place for pedestrians and is closed to all pedestrian traffic. Bicycles/eBikes can travel with traffic but need to have lighting to ensure that they are seen when traveling through the tunnel.

- **Bicycles and eBikes:** Access on the Wetherill road is closed to bicycles and eBikes.

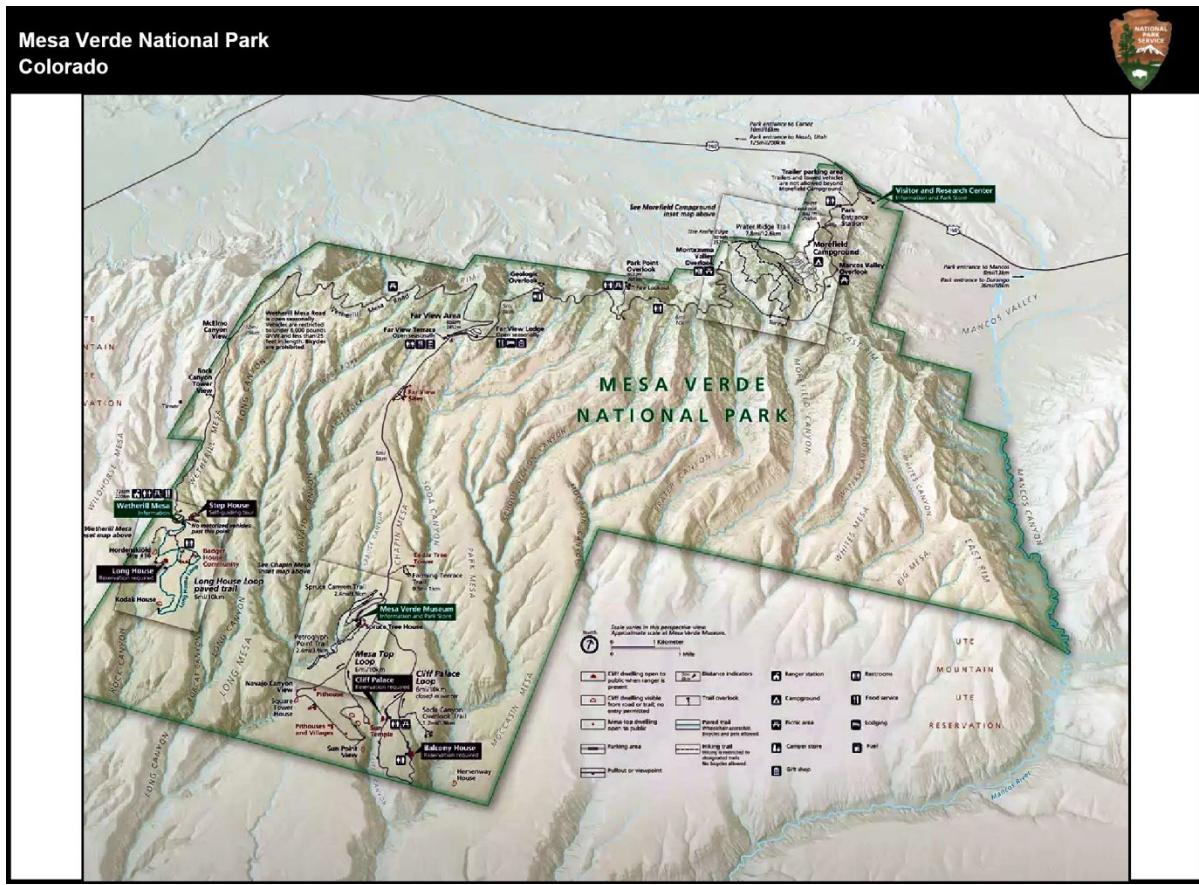
**Determination:** Due to the narrow, steep, and curvy road, the road is closed to all bicycles and eBikes.

- **25-foot vehicles:** Vehicles over 25 feet are not allowed on the Wetherill Road or in the Far View Sites areas.

**Determination:** Due to the narrow, steep and curvy roadway on the Wetherill road, vehicles over 25 feet will not be able to stay within their lane of traffic and therefore are not allowed. The Far View sites is a narrow, looped road and vehicles over 25 feet are unable to maneuver the loop when other vehicles are parked around the loop.

- **Backcountry travel, off trail and site visits:** Public access within Mesa Verde is limited to designated trails and areas designated by the Superintendent. The trails and areas listed are shown on the official park maps below and posted within the park.
- **All formal overlooks, pullouts, and interpretive waysides with sites not labeled as trails are open to the public as signed at each location.**
  - Point Look Out Trail
  - Prater Ridge Trail
  - The Knife Edge Trail
  - Park Point Look Out Trail
  - Far View Sites
  - Cedar Tree Tower Site
  - Farming Terrace Trail
  - Spruce Tree Canyon Trail
  - Petroglyph Point Trail
  - Sun Temple Site
  - Soda Canyon Overlook Trail
  - Step House Site
  - Nordenskiold Site #16 Trail
  - Long House Loop Paved Trail

▪ **Badger House Community Site**



**Determination:** 36 CFR 7.39(b) *Hiking is only permitted on trails designated for that purpose by the Superintendent by the posting of appropriate signs or by marking on a map which shall be available for inspection by the public at park headquarters and other convenient locations within the park.*

- **Picnicking:** Picnicking is prohibited from dusk to dawn.

**Determination:** *Picnic areas are not intended for overnight use, the prohibition for picnicking after dusk enables park staff to better manage those areas as they are intended to be used.*

- **Chapin Mesa Picnic Area Grills:** The cooking grills are Closed to use for fire of any kind or purpose.

**Determination:** *The grills in Chapin Mesa Picnic area are in poor shape and due for replacement. The continued use of the grills in place presents a hazard and threat of wildfire ignition if used in their current condition.*

**(a)(2) The following areas have been designated for a specific use or activity, under the conditions and/or restrictions as noted:**

***Filming, still photography, and audio recording activity may require a permit, consent with 54 U.S.C.100905***

- Filming, still photography, and audio recording activity that occurs in closed areas, requires exclusive use of a site or area, or involves a set or staging equipment other than handheld equipment (such as a tripod, monopod, and handheld lighting equipment) requires a permit, unless the activity is affiliated with an activity or event that has been allowed under a written authorization, such as a special use permit.
- Filming, still photography, and audio recording that involves more than eight individuals requires a permit, unless the NPS has specifically notified an individual or group that a permit is not required, or if the activity is affiliated with an activity or event that has been allowed under a written authorization, such as a special use permit.
- If a permit is required for the reasons stated above, or if the NPS otherwise determines and then notifies an individual or group that a permit is required for a filming, still photography, or audio recording activity, then engaging in that activity without a permit is prohibited. Violating a term or condition of a permit issued by the NPS for filming, still photography, or audio recording activity is prohibited, and may result in the suspension or revocation of the permit, in addition to any penalties that may apply under 36 CFR 1.3.

**Determination:**

*Federal law at 54 U.S.C. 100905 states that permits and fees are not required for filming, still photography, or audio recording in park areas if certain requirements are met. These requirements address various topics, including, but not limited to, group size, location, equipment, potential impacts to resources and visitors, and the likelihood that the NPS will incur related administrative costs. If any of these requirements are not met, the law allows the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the NPS, to require a permit for the subject activity. Permit requirements are imposed by the superintendent under discretionary authority provided by 36 CFR 1.5(a)(2), which allows the superintendent to impose conditions or restrictions on a use or activity, consistent with applicable legislation, to implement management responsibilities. The general regulations for permits in 36 CFR 1.6 do not apply to permits issued for filming, still photography, and audio recording, which instead are governed by the statutory provisions in 54 U.S.C. 100905. The imposition of permit requirements, on a case-by-case basis, for filming, still photography, or audio recording does not require rulemaking under 36 CFR 1.5(b). Requiring a permit with reasonable terms and conditions in accordance with statutory requirements at 54 U.S.C. 100905 is not highly controversial, will not result in a significant alteration in the public use pattern of the System unit, will not adversely affect the System unit's natural, aesthetic, scenic or cultural values, or require a long-term or significant modification in the resource management objectives of the System unit, because the permit requirement is limited in time and scope to the specific activities authorized by the permit, which contain terms and conditions that protect the values, resources, and visitors of the System unit, and implements federal law.*

**The following restrictions and/or conditions are in effect for the specific uses or activities noted:**

**Passenger Carrying Busses**

- Allowing bus engines to idle for more than 10 minutes is prohibited.

**Determination:** *The idling of bus engines adds unnecessary exhaust fumes in the air and diminishes the peace, tranquility, and enjoyment of the park by visitors.*

**Geo-caching**

- The creation or maintenance of a “geo-cache” containing any physical items within the park is prohibited. “Virtual” caches may be created and maintained if they meet the designated management conditions of the location. Conditions include consistency with park regulations such as not encouraging off-trail travel or travel in closed areas, visitor safety considerations,

and the protection of resources. (Abandoning or leaving property unattended is also a violation of 36 CFR, Section 2.22(a) – Property).

**Determination:** *The purpose of this restriction is to protect the natural, cultural and archaeological resources from damage due to geo-caching, and to preserve the landscape in as pristine a visual condition as possible.*

- **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)**

Launching, landing, or operating an unmanned aircraft from or on lands and waters administered by the National Park Service within the boundaries of Mesa Verde National Park is prohibited except as approved in writing by the superintendent.

**Definition:** *The term "unmanned aircraft" means 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.*

**Determinations:** *This restriction is necessary to prevent unacceptable impacts to park resources and values from the use of uncrewed aircraft. Potential impacts include harming visitors, interfering with rescue operations, causing excessive noise, impacting viewsheds, and disturbing wildlife. This restriction is required by NPS Reference Manual #60: Aviation Management, Chapter 12 – Uncrewed Aircraft Systems. properly evaluated whether this use is appropriate could result in unacceptable impacts to park resources, values, and visitor safety. Unmanaged or unrestricted recreational use of model aircraft and UASs within Mesa Verde National Park will conflict with, or impact, a variety of park uses including visitor experience of unimpaired view sheds; the disturbance, displacement or harassment of park wildlife; creation of public safety hazards per operation near roadways or large aggregations of visitors; and visual or aural impacts to wilderness character and values within the park backcountry.*

- **Overnight Stays:** Morefield Campground and the Far View Lodge are the only acceptable areas where overnights stays will occur within Mesa Verde National Park. Both areas are operated by the concession contract and are open to visitation between April to October each year.

**Determination:** *Due to the significance of the park, the sensitivity of natural and cultural resources, and applicable resource-related regulations, we only allow the overnight stays within the established Morefield Campground and the Far View Lodge. This assists us in the protection of the natural and cultural resources.*

- **Winter Activities:** The Morefield Campground roads are used as a snowshoe and cross-country ski areas when and if there is sufficient depth of snow to groom the roadway in the campground. Snowshoeing and hiking are only allowed on designated winter trails in the campground.

**Determination:** *Due to the sensitivity of the natural and cultural resources, the trails to be groomed for the winter activities (snowshoe and cross-country skiing) will be on the established roadways within the Morefield Campground during the winter months when snow levels are deep enough to allow the grooming to take place.*

## II. 36 CFR §1.6 – ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE A PERMIT

**(f) The following is a compilation of those activities for which a permit from the superintendent is required:**

- Some filming, still photography, and audio recording (depends upon the facts and circumstances; contact the park for more information). 36 CFR 1.5(a)(2) and 54 U.S.C. 100905.

§1.5(d) The following activities related to Public Use Limits:

- Cliff dwelling and backcountry tours require a tour reservation purchased through recreation.gov.
- See Section 36 CFR 2.23 RECREATION FEES

§2.4(d) Carry or possess a weapon, trap, or net

- Request a permit by submitting an application through [irma.nps.gov/RPRS](http://irma.nps.gov/RPRS).
- Refer to 36 CFR 2.4 WEAPONS, TRAPS, AND NETS

§2.5(a) Specimen collection (Take plant, fish, wildlife, rocks or minerals)

- Request a permit by submitting an application through [irma.nps.gov/RPRS](http://irma.nps.gov/RPRS).
- Refer to 36 CFR 2.5 RESEARCH SPECIMENS

**Note:** When permits are required for scientific activities pertaining solely to cultural resources, including archeology, ethnography, history, cultural museum objects, cultural landscapes, and historic and prehistoric structures, other permit procedures apply and will be outlined during the permitting process.

§2.10(a) The following camping activities:

- Morefield Campground

*Morefield Campground is managed by park concessionaire, Aramark. Reservations and camp permits can be obtained online at [www.visitmesaverde.com](http://www.visitmesaverde.com), by calling 1-800-449-2288, or at the Morefield Campground Store.*

§2.11 Picnicking

Picnicking hours are limited and are listed in section 1.5(a)(1) "Closures".

- Groups of 21 or more may be allowed to picnic in the designated Mesa Top Loop road, Chapin Mesa, and Wetherill Mesa area by permit.
- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)

§2.12 Audio Disturbances:

- (a)(2) Operating a chainsaw in developed areas
- (a)(3) Operation of any type of portable motor or engine, or device powered by a portable motor or engine in non-developed areas
- (a)(4) Operation of a public address system in connection with a public gathering or special event for which a permit has been issued pursuant to §2.50 or §2.51
- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Refer to 36 CFR §2.12 AUDIO DISTURBANCES

§2.17 Aircraft & Air Delivery:

- (a)(3) Delivery or retrieval of a person or object by parachute, helicopter or other airborne means
- (c)(1) Removal of a downed aircraft
- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Please refer to 36 CFR § 2.17 AIRCRAFT AND AIR DELIVERY

§2.23(b) The following special recreation activities (per 36 CFR Part 71):

**(a)** The following areas within Mesa Verde National Park are designated recreation fee areas:

- Mesa Verde National Park is a recreation fee area, fees are collected at the Entrance Station year-round.
- Cliff dwelling and backcountry tours require a reservation fee. Fees are collected through Recreation.gov

The superintendent may, when in the public interest, prescribe periods during which the collection of recreation fees shall be suspended.

§2.37 Soliciting or demanding gifts, money goods or services (Pursuant to the terms and conditions of a permit issued under §2.50, §2.51 or §2.52)

- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Please refer to 36 CFR § 2.37 NONCOMMERCIAL SOLICITING

§2.38 Using or possessing explosives:

- Using, possessing, storing, or transporting explosives, blasting agents
- Using or possessing fireworks
- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Please refer to 36 CFR § 2.38 EXPLOSIVES

§2.50(a) Conduct a sports event, pageant, regatta, public spectator attraction, entertainment, ceremony, and similar events

- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Please refer to 36 CFR § 2.50 SPECIAL EVENTS

§2.51(a) Public assemblies, meetings, gatherings, demonstrations, parades and other public expressions of views

Public gatherings or demonstrations including, but not limited to, religious observances or distribution of related materials may be held only in the following designated area:

- The designated public assembly sites are:
  - Visitor Center location is Northwest of the Visitor Center adjacent to the parking lot, (See Figure 1). All activities are to remain within this area and not extend further in any direction.
  - Morefield location is east of the Contact Station adjacent to the road entrance, (See Figure 2).
  - Far View location is south of the restaurant adjacent to the parking lot entrance, (See Figure 3)
  - Headquarters locations is east of the restaurant adjacent to the parking lot (See Figure 4).

The following restrictions and/or conditions are in effect for the specific uses or activities:

- Implementation of a public use limit: Groups of 25 or more engaged in public gatherings or demonstrations including, but not limited to, religious observances or distribution of related materials, must obtain a permit in accordance with the criteria and procedures of 36 CFR 1.6. Individuals or groups of less than 25 do not need a permit but must remain within the designated area.
- Groups of 25 or more may not circumvent the permit process by breaking into smaller groups.
- Normal pedestrian traffic may not be impeded by activities under this section.
- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Please refer to 36 CFR § 2.51 DEMONSTRATIONS



Mesa Verde National Park  
Colorado



Morefield Ranger Station  
Designated Location for Public Assemblies and Sale or Distribution of Printed Matter

■ Designated Area

■ Designated Location

■ Comfort Station

■ Food Service

■ Parking

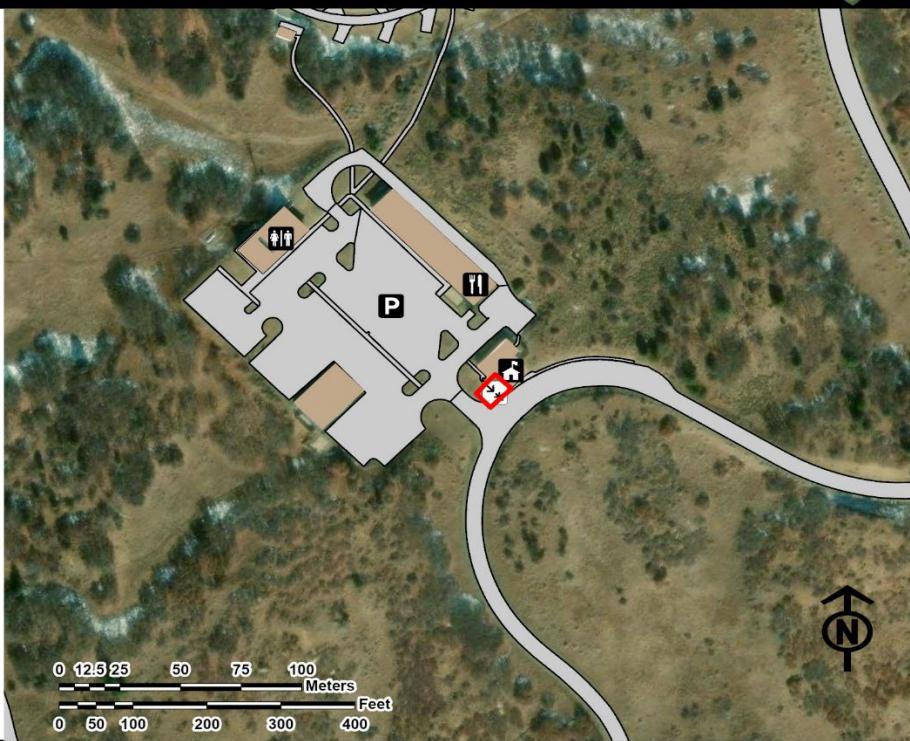
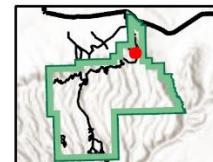
■ Ranger Station

Buildings

■ Public Use

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Mesa Verde National Park  
Colorado



Far View Terrace  
Designated Location for Public Assemblies and Sale or Distribution of Printed Matter

■ Designated Area

■ Designated Location

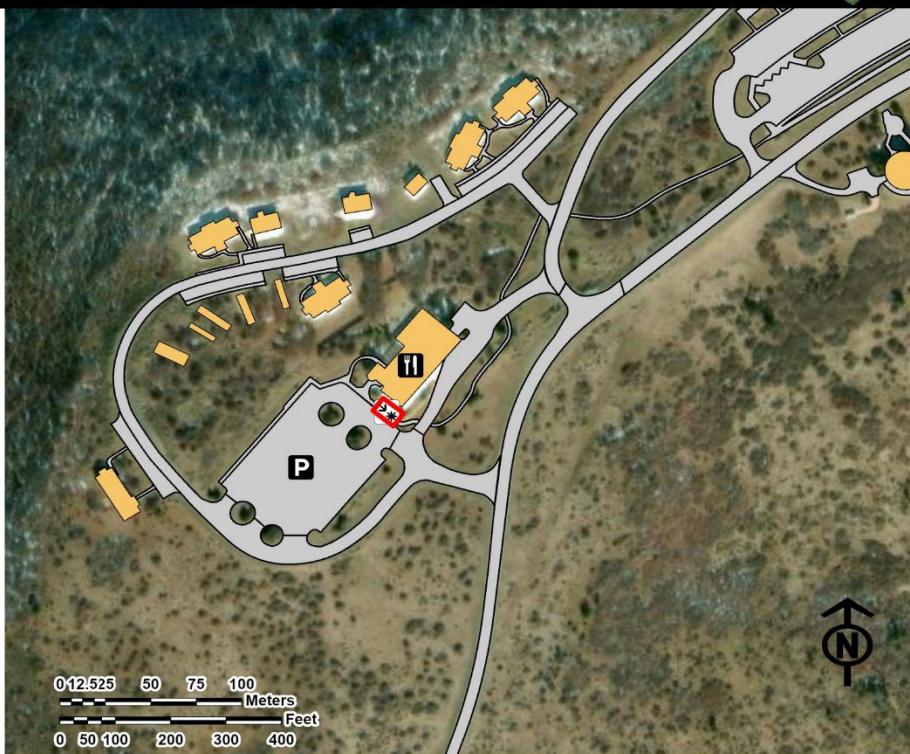
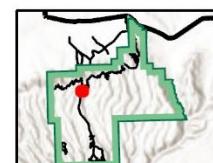
■ Food Service

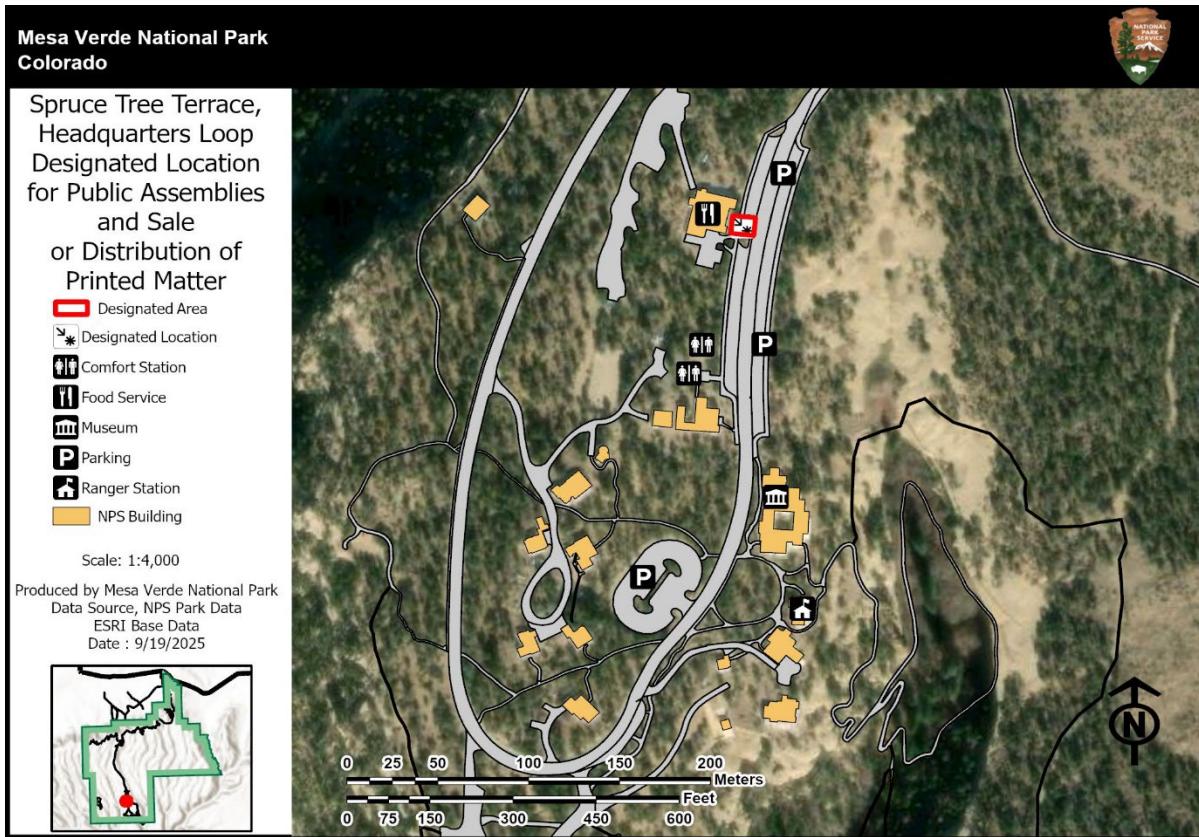
■ Parking

■ NPS Building

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**Determinations:** In order to accommodate Freedom of Speech Activities, the Superintendent has designated these areas (Figure 1 thru 4) where such activities may take place. Groups of 25 or more are required to obtain a permit. The Superintendent will issue permits upon request after making a determination that the requested activity will not have an adverse impact on public health and safety, environmental or scenic values, natural or cultural resources, scientific research, implementation of management responsibilities, proper allocation and use of facilities, or the avoidance of conflict among visitor use activities. The Superintendent must remain content neutral when evaluating the issuance of a permit for First Amendment activities. Use of these areas will be on a "first come, first served" basis. A group holding a permit will NOT have priority over a smaller group already in place.

#### §2.52(c) Sale or distribution of printed matter that is not solely commercial advertising

- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Please refer to 36 CFR § 2.52 SALE of PRINTED MATTER and THE DISTRIBUTION of PRINTED MATTER and OTHER MESSAGE-BEARING ITEMS.

#### §2.22(a)(2) Property may be left unattended for periods longer than 24 hours in the following areas and under the following conditions

- With permission of the Superintendent upon approval of a permit or special use authorization.
- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)

§5.1 Advertisements - (Display, posting or distribution.)

- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Please refer to 36 CFR § 5.1 ADVERTISEMENTS

§5.6(c) Use of commercial vehicles on park area roads (The superintendent shall issue a permit to access private lands within or adjacent to the park when access is otherwise not available)

- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Please refer to 36 CFR § 5.6(c) COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

§5.7 Construction of buildings, facilities, trails, roads, boat docks, path, structure, etc.

- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Refer to 36 CFR § 5.7 CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS OR OTHER FACILITIES

§ 7.39 Mesa Verde National Park

- (a) Visiting of cliff dwellings is prohibited except when persons are accompanied by a uniformed National Park Service employee employed at Mesa Verde National Park. However, the Superintendent may issue special written permits to persons engaged in scientific investigations authorizing them to visit cliff dwellings without escort, provided specific provisions of the regulation are met.
- Request permits through the Superintendent's Office 970-529-4611 or email [MEVE\\_Special\\_Park\\_Uses@nps.gov](mailto:MEVE_Special_Park_Uses@nps.gov)
- Please refer to 36 CFR § 7.39 MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK.

### III. GENERAL REGULATIONS

#### **36 CFR §2.1 – PRESERVATION OF NATURAL, CULTURAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**(a)(4) Dead wood on the ground may be collected for use as fuel for campfires within the park in the following areas:**

- The collection of wood is prohibited within the park.

**(a)(5) The following conditions are in effect for walking, climbing, entering, ascending or traversing archeological or cultural resource, monuments or statues:**

- Entering archeological sites within the backcountry and wilderness is allowed under the following conditions:
  - Climbing, walking on, sitting on, or otherwise having physical contact with standing wall, prehistoric structures, shrines, or other exposed archeological features is prohibited.
  - In the backcountry, except for cliff dwellings, walking through unexposed archeological features is allowed for exploration purposes so long as such actions are not damaging to the resource and in accordance with 36 CFR § 2.1.
  - Entering cliff dwellings without a uniformed ranger is prohibited per 36 CFR § 7.39 Mesa Verde National Park
- Archeological sites accessible directly from approved guided and signed trails by established ladders and trails may be entered, for day use visits only.
- In other areas as designated by the Superintendent pursuant to the issuance of a permit.

**(b) Hiking or pedestrian traffic is restricted to the trail or walkway as listed in Section 1.5 of this document.**

- The Superintendent may restrict hiking or pedestrian use to a designated trail or walkway system
- Refer to Section I 36 CFR § 1.5(a)(1)

**(c)(1), (c)(2) The following fruits, nuts, and berries may be gathered by hand for personal use or consumption, in accordance with the noted size, quantity, collection sites and/or use or consumption restrictions:** This may occur in any front country areas accessible to the public, but can only be collected within arms reach of standing on a public trail, road, or parking area.

- Pinyon nuts, up to 1 pound per person per day.
- Chokecherries, up to 1 pound per person per day.
- Juniper berries, up to 1 pound per person per day.
- Prickly pear fruit up to 1 pound per day.

**Determination:** The unrestricted collection of native fruits, berries, nuts, and fruiting bodies could adversely impact plant propagation and/or wildlife food sources.

#### **36 CFR §2.2 - WILDLIFE PROTECTION**

**(d) The transporting of lawfully taken wildlife through the park is permitted under the following conditions and procedures:**

- Persons transporting legally taken wildlife from Ute Mountain Ute land through the park will have in their possession a valid state and tribal ID with a tribal hunting license. Animal carcasses will display a valid tribal game tag that is completed and affixed to the carcass and will be subject to inspection at any time by an authorized person.

**(e) The following areas are closed to the viewing of wildlife with the use of an artificial light:**

- The use of artificial light sources (such as spotlighting) to deliberately illuminate or view wildlife including infrared, thermal imaging, or ultra-violet (black light) devices of any kind is prohibited.

**Determination:** *Hunting or the 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.*

**36 CFR §2.10 – CAMPING and FOOD STORAGE**

**(a) The sites and areas listed below have been designated for camping activities as noted. A permit system has been established for certain campgrounds or camping activities, and conditions for camping and camping activities are in effect as noted:**

- Morefield Campground

**(b)(4) Generator use is permitted only between the hours of:**

- 7:00 am to 9:00 am
- 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm
- 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

**(d) Conditions for the storage of food are in effect, as noted, for all park areas:**

- Food and trash left unattended must be secured in a vehicle, food-storage locker at campsites, or in an IGBC (International Grizzly Bear Committee) certified secured bear-proof container.

**36 CFR §2.11 – PICNICKING**

Certain areas have been closed to picnicking and are listed in section 1.5(a)(1) "Closures".

**Conditions for Picnicking:**

- Picnicking is permitted in Morefield Campground, at no cost, at vacant campsites, between the hours of 10 am and 3 pm.
- Food and trash must be secured in a vehicle, bear box or bear proof container if left unattended.

**36 CFR §2.13 – FIRES**

**(a)(1) The lighting or maintaining of fires is generally prohibited, except as provided for in the following designated areas and/or receptacles, and under the conditions noted:**

A fire may be ignited and maintained only by using fuel sources designed and commonly used for warmth or the preparation of food, such as charcoal briquettes or natural firewood. Lighting or maintaining a fire with other materials including, but not limited to, flammable liquids, garbage, fireworks, plastics, aerosol canisters,

batteries, or other manufactured or synthetic materials, is prohibited.

Designated Areas:

- Morefield Campground
- Designated picnic areas
- Employee residence

Receptacles Allowed:

- Park provided fire rings
- Park provided grills
- Park approved residential fire rings
- Grills and stoves manufactured for cooking

Established Conditions for Fires:

- *Fires are allowed unless the park has implemented Fire Restrictions or closures.*

**Determination:** *This action is necessary for the maintenance of public health and safety, protection of environmental or scenic values, protection of natural or cultural resources, and the implementation of management responsibilities. Materials other than approved combustibles – especially fire accelerants and substances prone to wind transport or explosion – creates serious risks when used to light or maintain fires. These combustibles can ignite or spread wildfires that directly threaten people and valuable resources and assets. The burning of manufactured or synthetic materials can contribute to air pollution, contaminate soil and water, and be toxic to humans and the environment. Less restrictive measures, such as an education campaign informing visitors of the risks of using certain materials to light or maintain a fire, would not be commensurate with the substantial risks associated with those activities and could lead to adverse outcomes that might be prevented by establishing an enforceable condition.*

**(b) Fires must be extinguished according to the following conditions:**

- All fires must be extinguished so coals are cold to touch and pose no threat of reignition.

**Determination:** *The use of fires in the Park is regulated to protect structures, natural resources and the public. During extreme weather conditions, open fires may be restricted to prevent the accidental ignition of wildfires. Section 2.13(b) does not apply to planned ignitions by park management.*

**36 CFR §2.14 – SANITATION and REFUSE**

**(a)(2) The use of wildlife-proof government refuse receptacles or facilities for dumping household, commercial or industrial refuse, brought as such from private or municipal property is allowed under the following conditions:**

- Waste generated while visiting Mesa Verde National Park may be placed in government receptacles. General household, commercial, or industrial waste generated outside of the Park is prohibited.
- Human waste must be buried or carried out from the backcountry in compliance with the backcountry use guidelines available at the Visitor Center. No burning of any materials is permitted.

**Determination:** *Refuse containers are placed throughout the park to service the visitor. Household waste from outside the park taxes the capacity of trash receptacles and adds to the cost of waste*

removal. Burning of waste materials in the backcountry is not allowed due to the high possibility of starting wildfire. Backcountry use guidelines are available at the Visitor Center.

## **36 CFR §2.15 – PETS**

### **(a)(1) Pets are prohibited in government facilities and on the following park trails and guided tour trails:**

- All governments facilities
- Balcony House
- Cliff Palace
- Spruce Tree House beyond the overlook per signage
- Step House
- Long House
- Petroglyph Point
- Spruce Canyon Trail
- Farming Terrace Trail
- Soda Canyon Overlook Trail
- Knife Edge Trail
- Point Lookout Trail
- Prater Ridge Trail
- All groomed snow trails or routes

### **(a)(3) Pets may be left unattended and tied to an object in the following areas, under the conditions noted:**

- Leaving a pet unattended and tied to an object is prohibited.
- It is unlawful to leave a domestic animal unattended in a vehicle when the conditions in that vehicle would constitute a health hazard to the animal. Appropriate ventilation and water for the animal must be present during days that reach 65 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

NOTE: The concession at Morefield Campground operates a climate controlled kennel for pets, hours are seasonal; for more information checkout [Aramark's Morefield Campground webpage, or call the kennel at 970-565-2133.](#)

### **(a)(5) Pet excrement must be disposed of in accordance with the following conditions:**

- Pets owners or responsible persons shall promptly collect and properly dispose of pet fecal matter in residential and public use areas. Fecal material should be collected in a plastic bag and disposed of in a garbage can.

### **(e) Pets may be kept by park residents under the following conditions:**

- Pets are kept in accordance with the Mesa Verde National Park Housing Pet Policy
- Full compliance with applicable regulations.

## **36 CFR §2.16 – HORSES and PACK ANIMALS**

### **(b) The use of horses or pack animals is allowed on the following trails, routes or areas:**

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

**Determination:** The park does not maintain its trails for stock use and due to the conditions of trails in the Park, the Superintendent has deemed the use of stock and pack animals unsafe and that any use will result in further deterioration of trails and of the area around trails, as stock are forced to travel off trail around the worst areas.

**(g) Other conditions concerning the use of horses or pack animals:**

- Only certified weed-free pellets, cubes, or hay can be fed to horses and pack animals when used within the park for official business or approved events. It is recommended that the horses and/or pack animals be fed the weed free feed for 48 hours before entering the Park.

**Determination:** In order to preserve the natural ecosystem and deter the introduction of non-native plant species it is necessary to restrict stock diets to weed free prior to and during use in the park.

**36 CFR §2.17 – AIRCRAFT and AIR DELIVERY**

**(c)(1) The removal of a downed aircraft, components, or parts thereof is subject to procedures established by the Superintendent through written authorization.**

- See Section II in compendium 36 CFR §1.6 – ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE A PERMIT, 36 CFR §2.17 – AIRCRAFT and AIR DELIVERY

**Determination:** Section (c)(1) authorizes the superintendent to establish procedures for the removal of an aircraft; establish a timeframe for the removal; determine times and means of access to the site, and specify the manner or method of removal. The intent of this section is to allow superintendents control over the recovery of downed aircraft through a permitting process. [48 FR 30268, June 30, 1983]

**36 CFR §2.18 – SNOWMOBILES**

**(c) Snowmobiles may be operated only on routes designated in section 7**

- Snowmobile use is prohibited except for administrative/emergency use and only when their use is consistent with the park's natural, cultural, scenic and aesthetic values, safety considerations, and will not disturb wildlife or damage park resources.

**36 CFR §2.19 – WINTER ACTIVITIES**

**(a) The following park roads and/or parking areas open to motor vehicle traffic may be used for skiing, snowshoeing, and similar winter activities under the conditions noted:**

- Morefield Campground roads once the road has been closed and appropriate snow levels are present on the roadways.
- Cliff Palace Road once the road has been closed and appropriate snow levels are present on the roadway.

**36 CFR §2.20 – SKATING, SKATEBOARDS and SIMILAR DEVICES**

**The use of roller skates, skateboards, roller skis, coasting vehicles, or similar devices are prohibited except in the following areas:**

- Chapin Mesa "Stone House" Residential Area
- Hogan Loop Road
- White House Loop Road

- Far View Residential Area (road in front of NPS resident housing only)
- Morefield Residential Area (road in front of NPS resident housing and Navajo Loop
- Building 41, Entrance Residential Area, parking area

**Determination:** *The residential areas, housing for NPS employees, provide the principal areas for play and activity by children of residents. Skating and using skateboards are activities one can expect children to enjoy. These areas do not have any conflicting uses involving visitor recreation and they are areas in which traffic hazards should be minimized.*

### **36 CFR §2.21 – SMOKING**

**(a) The following portions of the park, or all or portions of buildings, structures or facilities are closed to smoking as noted:**

- Smoking is prohibited in all government facilities including the park's museum, visitor center, within cliff dwellings and archeological sites, as well as within 25 feet of a public building entrance.
- The Superintendent may designate a portion of a park area as closed to smoking when necessary to protect park resources, reduce the risk of fire, or prevent conflicts among visitor use activities. Smoking in an area or location so designated is prohibited.

**Determination:** *Smoking is prohibited to protect park resources, reduce the risk of fire, or prevent conflicts among visitor use activities. Electronic cigarettes are included in the above restrictions*

### **36 CFR §2.22 – PROPERTY**

**(a)(2) Property may be left unattended for periods longer than 24 hours in the following areas and under the following conditions:**

*See Section II in the compendium 36 CFR §1.6 – ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE A PERMIT, 36 CFR §2.22 – PROPERTY*

**Determination:** *The purpose of this restriction is to protect the natural, cultural, and archaeological resources from damage from geocaching and similar activities and to preserve the landscape in as pristine visual condition as possible.*

### **36 CFR §2.23 – RECREATION FEES**

**(b) Recreation fees, and/or a permit, in accordance with 36 CFR part 71, are established for the following entrance fee areas, and/or for the use of the following specialized sites, facilities, equipment or services, or for participation in the following group activity, recreation events or specialized recreation uses:**

Entrance Fee Areas:

- Mesa Verde National Park is a designated recreation fee area. Fees are collected at the Entrance Station year-round.

Cliff Dwelling and Backcountry Tours:

- Mesa Verde National Park offers Cliff dwelling and backcountry tours through Recreation.gov. Go to [Recreation.gov](http://Recreation.gov) or call the toll free number 1-877-444-6777 for complete times and dates, additional safety recommendations, costs and other important information.

### **36 CFR §2.35 –ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES and CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

**(a)(3)(i) The following public use areas, portions of public use areas, and/or public facilities within the park are closed to consumption of alcoholic beverages, and/or to the possession of a bottle, can or other receptacle containing an alcoholic beverage that is open, or has been opened, or whose seal has been broken or the contents of which have been partially removed:**

- The consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited along all park roads, including all pull-outs and overlooks. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on all trails and in cliff dwellings.

***Determination:*** *These restrictions discourage irresponsible or unsafe drinking behaviors while still allowing for legal, responsible use of alcoholic beverages.*

#### **36 CFR §2.62 – MEMORIALIZATION**

(b) Scattering ashes from human cremation is prohibited

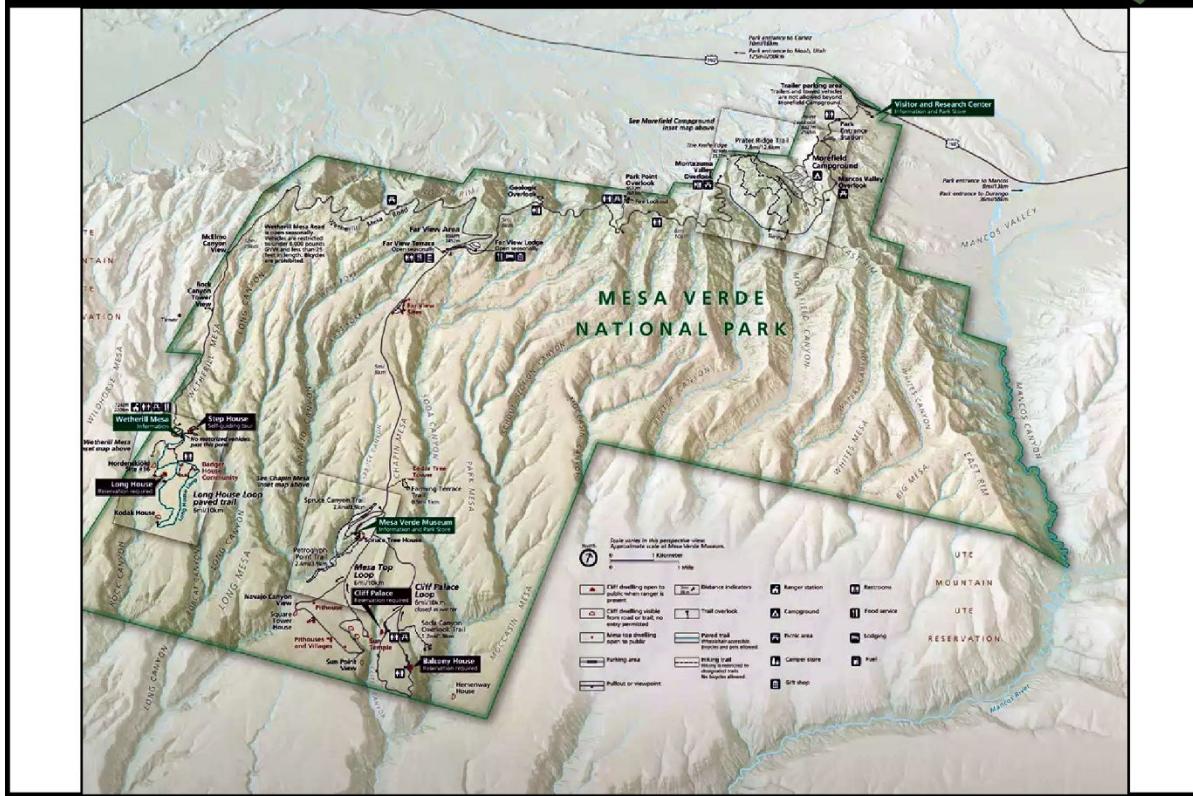
***Determination:*** *Mesa Verde National Park is a culturally sensitive area and continues to be used by affiliated Tribes. The Superintendent has prohibited the scattering of ashes to protect the integrity of the cultural landscape and respect the wishes of the affiliated tribes.*

#### **36 CFR §4.10 – TRAVEL ON PARK ROADS AND ROUTES**

**(a) Park roads, open to the public for travel by motor vehicle are those indicated below, and/or as indicated in the following publication or document (attached hereto):**

- Ruins Road (Main Park Road)
- Morefield Campground Road
- Wetherill Mesa Road
- Mesa Top Loop
- Cliff Palace Loop

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**36 CFR §4.30 – BICYCLES**

**(a) Park roads and parking areas that are closed to bicycle use are listed in section 1.5 of this document.**

- Bicycle use within Mesa Verde National Park is permitted only on routes open to public motor vehicles, except the Wetherill Mesa Road

**The following additional routes, in developed areas or special use zones, have been designated for bicycle use:**

- Long House Loop

**Determination:** *The Long House Loop is a developed paved loop route that was previously used for a tram shuttle system that is not currently in use. The park has determined that allowing bicycles on the loop does affect the park's natural, scenic and aesthetic values, disturb wildlife, or cause concern for safety or management objectives.*

**36 CFR §7.39 – Mesa Verde National Park**

**(a) Visiting cliff dwellings is prohibited except when persons are accompanied by a uniformed National Park Service employee. The Superintendent may issue special written permits to persons engaged in scientific investigations authorizing such persons to visit the cliff dwellings without escort.**

- See section III of the compendium, 36 CFR §1.6 – ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE A PERMIT, 36 CFR §7.39 - MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK