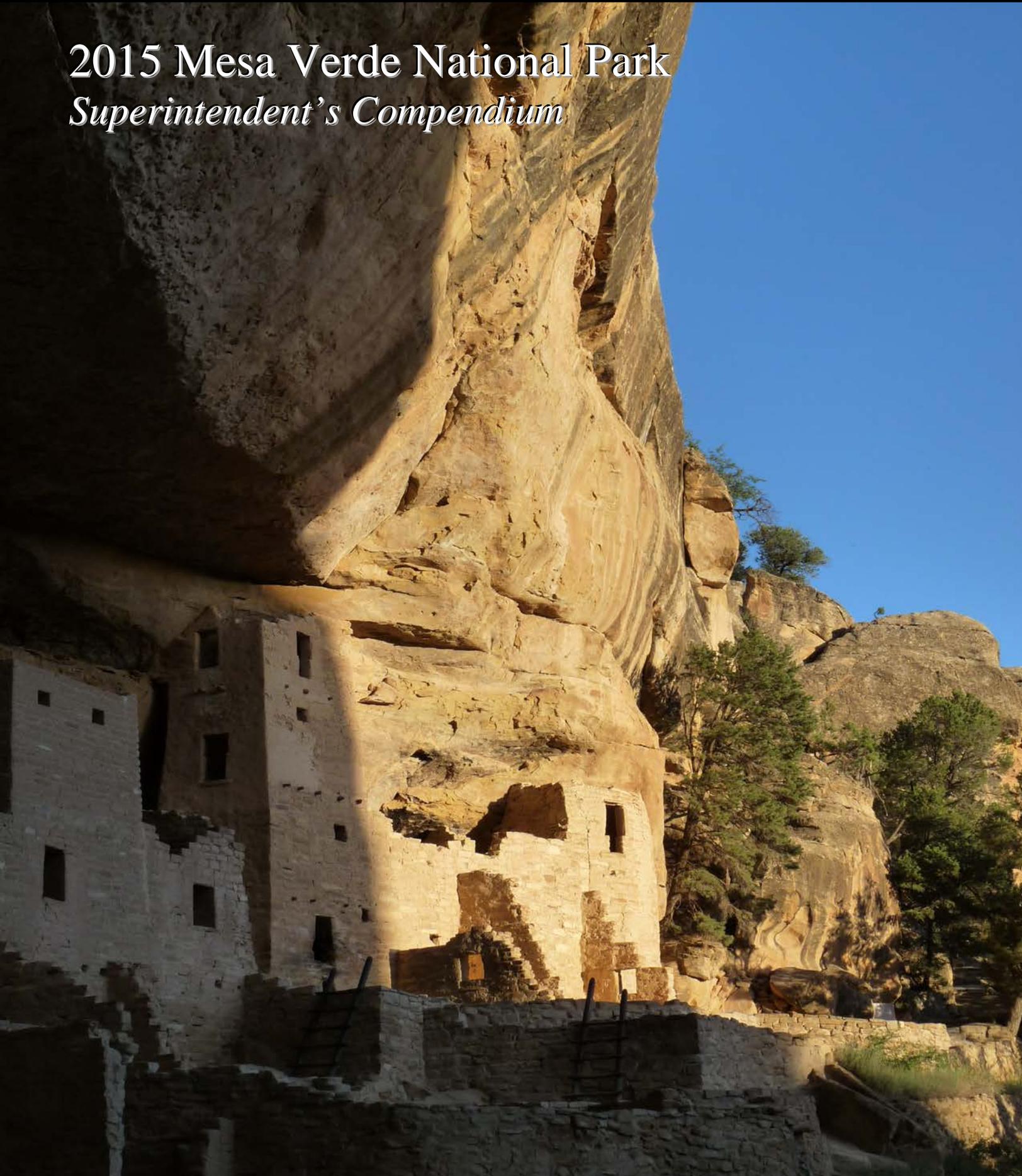




2015 Mesa Verde National Park  
*Superintendent's Compendium*





**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
2015 COMPENDIUM, REVISED 9/17/2015  
MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK  
P.O. BOX 8  
MESA VERDE, COLORADO 81330**

**AUTHORITY**

Designations, Closures, Permit Requirements, and other Restrictions and/or Specifications Imposed Under the Discretionarily Authority of the Superintendent, Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 1.

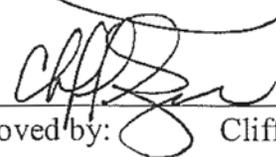
Under the authority of 16 USC, Section 3, and Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 1, Parts 1 or 7, this Compendium of Superintendent's Orders is established for Mesa Verde National Park. The orders listed in this compendium are a requirement of addition to those listed in Parts 1 or 7 of the Title 36 unless otherwise noted. The Specific authority for these regulatory authority procedures is found in Sections 1.5, 1.6, and 1.7 of Title 36.

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

As required by 1.7(b), designations, closures, permit requirements, and other restrictions imposed under discretionary authority shall be updated annually and made available to the public upon request.

Listing of Designations, Closures, Permit Requirements and Other Restrictions Imposed Under Discretionary Authority.

  
Recommended by: Jessie Farias Jr., Chief Ranger

  
Approved by: Cliff Spencer, Superintendent

9/17/2015  
Date

9/17/15  
Date

## **CFR Section §1.5 Closures and public use limits.**

### **General:**

1. **(a)(1)** Mesa Top Loop Road, Cedar Tree Tower, and Far View Group - The access roads to the Far View Group, Cedar Tree Tower, and Mesa Top Road are closed at sunset daily throughout the year. These sites in these areas are open for visitation between 8:00 a.m. and sunset.
2. **(a)(1)** Wetherill Mesa - Is open to the public during the dates and times as designated by the Superintendent.\* Visitation at any other time of the year must be arranged through the Office of the Superintendent. Vehicles exceeding 25 feet in length and/or over 8,000 pounds GVW are prohibited. Due to the steep nature of the road, lack of shoulders, poor condition of the pavement, and storm drains which run parallel to the road, bicycles are prohibited.
3. **(a)(1)** Due to narrow winding roads and lack of adequate parking, trailers or towed vehicles are prohibited on all park roads beyond (south of) Morefield Campground.
4. **(a)(1)** Long House Loop - Public access by this route to the Badger House Community is by bicycle or foot only. Visitation in this area is limited to those dates and times that Wetherill Mesa is open to the public. \*Visitation at any other time of the year must be arranged through the Office of the Superintendent.
5. **(a)(1)** Hiking is permitted only on the following designated trails: Prater Ridge Trail, Knife Edge Trail, Spruce Canyon Trail, Point Lookout Trail, Soda Canyon Overlook, Petroglyph Point Trail, Long House Loop road, Far View Sites, Farming Terrance and the Wetherill Badger House/Nordenskiold trails. Visitors using the Spruce Canyon and Petroglyph Point Trails must register at the trailhead. Off-Trail hiking is prohibited.
6. **(a)(1)** All backcountry areas are closed to public use due to the high number of fragile archeological sites throughout the park.
7. **(a)(1)** Visiting of cliff dwellings is prohibited except when persons are accompanied by a park employee.
8. **(a)(1)** Visiting cliff dwellings and other archeological sites for scientific or other park approved purposes is permitted without escort if approved by the Superintendent in writing; however, a backcountry or research permit and backcountry training is also required.
9. **(a)(1)** For public safety, due to a lack of lighting and no walkways, pedestrians are prohibited from using the main road tunnel (mile 5).

10. **(a)(1)** Employees may visit designated backcountry sites after obtaining a backcountry permit and under the conditions indicated on that permit. Designated sites will be determined by the Superintendent.
11. **(a)(1)** No food or drink, except plain water, may be consumed in any archeological site or cliff dwelling.
12. **(a)(1)** Visitors to the Research Center may not go beyond the reception area without approval of the Superintendent, the Chief of Research and Resource Management or the Park Curator. Visitors must be escorted at all times.
13. **(a)(1)** Visitors to the Research Library (located at the Visitor and Research Center) are not allowed in the historical book depository without approval of the Superintendent, Chief of Research and Resource Management or the Park Librarian. Visitors must be escorted at all times.
14. **(a)(1)** Government and private housing areas are closed to public access except for residents, guests of residents, or persons engaged in legitimate governmental activities or permitted business activities.
15. **(a)(1)** Closures of visitor use areas (campsites, trails, overlooks, interpretive stops along auto tours, etc.) may occur when necessary by posting appropriate signs to mitigate resource impacts associated with overuse, misuse, environmental, or health and safety issues.

***Determination:** These closures may be required for resource or visitor protection. Examples of this type of closure include social trail closures for re-vegetation, building closure due to safety issues, closure of a trail due to rock fall hazards, etc.*

16. **(a)(1)** All terrain vehicles (ATV) and utility terrain vehicles (UTVs), motorized vessels and any other type of motorized conveyance manufactured for recreational, non-highway, off-road or all terrain travel, including those licensed by a state for street use, within park boundaries is prohibited. The prohibition includes any vehicles defined by Colorado revised statutes 33-14.5-101.

***Determination:** The public use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) and other motorized conveyances manufactured for recreational, non-highway, off road, or all terrain travel within the park boundaries poses a significant risk to visitor safety, park resources and values which cannot be appropriately mitigated and which cannot be sustained without causing unacceptable impacts. The use of such vehicle is, therefore, not consistent with the protection of the park.*

17. **(a)(1)** E-Cigarettes or Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) are prohibited in all areas that tobacco smoking is not allowed. E-Cigarettes or ENDS will be treated as

one in the same and are not allowed to be used in facilities and vehicles owned or leased by the Government and within concession facilities

***Determination:** There is no scientific evidence to conclude that ENDS are safer than smoking. The nicotine used in these devices is a highly addictive drug. Available research on ENDS indicates that vaping liquids and their emissions contain more than just nicotine, including aerosolized flavorings, propylene glycol, formaldehyde (a known carcinogen), and other contaminants. The health effects of ENDS have not been thoroughly studied and are not well understood. The FDA has not approved ENDS as a smoking cessation device.*

- 18. (a)(2)** The Superintendent may temporarily close park roadways, parking areas, facilities, waters, and all or portions of the park when such actions are deemed necessary to ensure public safety, protection of resources, or the avoidance of visitor use conflicts. The posting of signs, maps, media announcements, and the use of barricades and/or gates will identify such closures.

Consistent with applicable legislation and Federal administrative policies, the Superintendent has established the following rules, designations, conditions and restrictions on the following park activities.

***Determination:** The closure is to provide for visitor and employee safety and preclude interference with emergency and administrative operations by visitors.*

- 19. (a)(2)** Bicycles - Due to the steep nature of the road, lack of shoulders and narrowness of the pavement, limited sight distance, and heavy vehicular traffic, commercial bicycle tours or other organized bicycle groups with over 6 riders are prohibited on all park roads.
- 20. (a)(2)** Commercial busses utilizing internal combustion engines must turn off their engines while parked. This restriction does not apply to vehicles loading and unloading or stopped on roadways in obedience to traffic control devices or orders, or as needed in response to legitimate traffic safety or operating concerns.
- 21. (a)(2)** 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: Unmanned Aircraft** “Unmanned aircraft” is defined as 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, and drones) that are used for any purpose, including for recreation or commerce.

***Determination:*** *The compendium closures required to implement this interim policy are necessary to maintain public health and safety in units of the National Park System and to protect park resources and values until the NPS can determine whether specific uses of unmanned aircraft on lands and waters administered by the NPS area appropriate and will not cause unacceptable impacts on the park resources and values. This closure by the superintendent implements Section 1.5 of NPS Management Policies 2006, which provides that a new form of park use may be allowed within a park only after a determination has been made in the professional judgment of the superintendent that it will not result in unacceptable impacts on park resources and values. When proposed park uses and the protection of the park resources and values come into conflict, the protection of the resources and values must be predominant. Restricting the use of unmanned aircraft is paramount in protecting Mesa Verde's world renowned historic cultural resources and the public who visit them. This closure is necessary to maintain public health and safety and to protect park resources including, but not limited to, the protection of wildlife mating, breeding, nesting, and feeding activities, wilderness character, scenic values, and soundscapes.*

- 22. (a)(3)(d)** Balcony House - Tours to Balcony House are limited to 50 visitors. Tour dates and times are designated by the Superintendent. \* Tickets are required. Balcony House tours are restricted due to the size of the site and for protection of the resources and safety of visitors.
- 23. (a)(3)(d)** Cliff Palace - Tours to Cliff Palace are limited to 50 visitors. Tour dates and times are designated by the Superintendent. \* Tickets are required. Cliff Palace tours are restricted for the protection of the resources and safety of visitors.
- 24. (a)(3)(d)** Long House – Tours to Long House are limited to 30 visitors. Tour dates and times are designated by the Superintendent.\* Tickets are required. Long House tours are restricted for the protection of the resources and safety of visitors.

## **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:

- Commercial filming and photography
- Some forms of still photography (after hours, areas that are closed to the general public, etc.)
- Weddings
- Commercial Tours
- Religious Services
- Memorial services
- Special assemblies

- First Amendment activities
- Collecting of resource materials

### **36 CFR Section §2.1 Preservation of natural, cultural, and archeological resources.**

1. (a)(4) Gathering wood in the park is prohibited.

**Wood from fuel reduction projects may be made available to the public and park employees through a lottery system.**

*Determination: Standing dead, down and live wood provide habitat for cavity-nesting species and insects, which are food for birds and other animals. These resources are protected in all National Park Service units.*

2. (c)(1) The gathering of fruits, berries, and nuts by hand for personal use along road sides and trails open to the public is allowed for:

- pinyon nuts (up to 3 pounds)
- chokecherries ( up to 4 pounds)
- small amounts of renewable vegetation, such as Indian Tobacco (up to 2 pounds)

*Determination: The unrestricted collection of native fruits, berries, nuts, and fruiting bodies could adversely impact plant propagation and/or wildlife food sources. Native Americans may collect traditional botanical items for personal use (edible and medicinal).*

### **36 CFR Section §2.2 Wildlife protection.**

1. (a) Elk bugles, varmint calls, audio attractants, or other artificial or natural means of attracting or disturbing wildlife (including rattling antlers, coyote, turkey and deer calls, or verbal bugling) are prohibited.

*Determination: Intentional disturbing of wildlife may adversely affect wildlife behavior (i.e., breeding and mating rituals, feeding habits, travel patterns/routes) possibly causing stressful and/or disruptive conditions for wildlife. Mesa Verde National Park is mandated to protect and preserve healthy and natural wildlife populations. Intentional disturbance by humans directly conflicts with this mandate and is unnatural. Using calls can cause wildlife to leave foraging and mating areas and attract them to roads where they are more likely to become injured or killed. They may also become unnatural prey if artificially attracted out of cover.*

2. **(d)** Wildlife taken lawfully outside the Park may be transported through the Park under the following conditions:
  1. Persons transporting will have in their possession a valid State or tribal hunting license.
  2. Animal carcasses will display a valid State or tribal game tag that is properly completed and affixed to the carcass.
  3. Animal carcasses will be subject to inspection at any time by an authorized person.

***Determination:** The Park does not wish to impede those who have been hunting legally outside of the park nor impede the transportation of legally taken game. The transportation of game through the Park, which is closed to hunting, however, has elicited visitor complaints and could cause confusion with the Park's no-hunting regulation. Law enforcement park rangers are authorized to check hunters transporting game to ensure wildlife was not taken illegally within the Park boundaries.*

3. **(e)** The Park is closed to viewing wildlife with any artificial light, which includes and is not limited to spotlights and vehicle headlights directed beyond those areas covered in normal highway driving.

***Determination:** The viewing of wildlife at night with the use of artificial lights temporarily blinds animals, which causes them to become unnatural prey for natural predators and poachers. Nighttime poaching during the hunting season is a potential problem in the Park.*

## **36 CFR Section §2.10 Camping.**

1. **(a)** Operating a gasoline/propane-powered generator inside a front-country campground between the hours of 10:00 pm and 6:00 am is prohibited.

***Determination:** The noise caused by operating a gasoline/propane generator in a campground during these hours disturbs other campers. Over the years, this generator noise has been a complaint to rangers from adjacent campers.*

2. **(a)** Camping is permitted only in the Morefield Campground and only during dates designated by the Superintendent. A 14-day camping limit is in effect. Camping permits are required. A limited number of group camping sites are available.

In Morefield Campground:

- No more than two tents per campsite are permitted and only if the site can accommodate them.

- No more than two vehicles per campsite are permitted, provided they can be parked at the site without obstructing traffic.
- No more than four motorcycles per campsite are permitted.
- No more than one vehicle/unit may hook up to utilities in a hookup site.
- Quiet hours are between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

***Determination:** Campground permits and the permit system help the park monitor visitor use, provide users important information about park regulations and resource protection and aid rangers conducting emergency operations, such as search and rescue and wildland fire evacuations and visitor emergency notifications.*

### 3. (d) Food Storage:

To prevent wildlife from becoming habituated to non-native food or attracted to campgrounds and public areas, food and garbage must be disposed of properly or stored in vehicles or a camping unit that is constructed of solid, non-pliable material. Ice chests/food coolers are not appropriate food storage devices. This restriction does not apply to food that is being transported, consumed, or prepared for consumption.

***Determination:** Incidents within Mesa Verde National Park with black bears accessing food due to improper storage by campers and day-users have been reported from 2003-2014. Proper food storage will reduce the likelihood of the area being temporarily closed to public use, a negative encounter between the public and a bear, and/or a bear being removed through trapping or euthanasia.*

## 36 CFR Section §2.11 Picnicking

Picnic sites are designated on Mesa Top Loop Road, Chapin Mesa, Wetherill Mesa, and in Morefield Campground.

Picnicking is permitted in Morefield Campground, for no charge, at vacant campsites, between the hours of 10 AM and 3 PM.

Picnicking is prohibited in backcountry areas of the park.

## 36 CFR Section §2.13 Fires

1. (a) Open wood fires are restricted to permanently installed metal fire rings or grills provided by the Park in Morefield Campground and Chapin Mesa picnic area. Visitors

may use portable gas or charcoal grills. Charcoal must be cooled and safely disposed of in a garbage receptacle.

Park residents may have fire in approved fire pits or grills.

2. (c) All or portions of Mesa Verde National Park may be closed to open fires during periods of high fire danger in conjunction with state and local fire bans.

***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 or wildfires determined by the Superintendent to be allowed to burn for resource benefit.*

### **36 CFR Section §2.15 Pets**

**This section does not pertain to specially trained service dogs meeting requirements listed under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and specially trained cattle dogs under the direct control of ranch hands engaged in approved livestock removal operations.**

1. (a) The following is prohibited:

(1) Pets are prohibited on trails leading to Balcony House, Cliff Palace, Spruce Tree House, Step House, Long House, and Far View Sites. Pets are prohibited in site shelters and cliff dwellings with the exception of the Bader House Community and Mesa Top Loop.

Pets are prohibited in the park's backcountry including, but not limited to, the following: Petroglyph Point Trail, Spruce Canyon Trail, Farming Terraces Trail, Soda Canyon Overlook Trail, Knife Edge Trail, Point Lookout Trail and Prater Ridge Trail.

Cross country skiing and snowshoeing is permitted on designated routes in Morefield and Prater Canyon. When the Cliff Palace Loop Road is closed due to snow, cross country skiing and snowshoeing is permitted. Pets are prohibited on groomed ski/snowshoeing routes.

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.

- (2) Failing to cage, crate, restrain on a leash, which shall not exceed six feet in length, or otherwise under physical restraint a pet at all times.
  - (3) Leaving a pet unattended and/or tied to an object.
  - (4) Allowing a pet to make noise that is unreasonable considering location, time of day or night, impact on the park users, and other relevant factors, or that frightens wildlife by barking, howling, or making other noise.
  - (5) Pet 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.
2. (e) Park residents may keep pets in accordance with the Mesa Verde National Park Housing Pet Policy and in full compliance with applicable regulations.

### **36 CFR Section §2.16 Horses and pack animals**

1. (g) The use of horses or pack animals in the park for private use or the keeping of horses in the campground is prohibited.
2. (g) Private livestock may be used in the park when used for official park operations or approved events and with the approval of National Park Service personnel. For example: private stock can be used to provide the NPS assistance in resource projects (horse counts, fencing resupply projects, resource protection patrols, wildlife surveys, etc.)
3. (g) Only certified weed-free pellets, cubes, or hay is allowed to be fed to private livestock that are used in the park for official business or approved events. It is recommended that pack animals be fed weed-free feed for 48 hours in advance of entering the Park.
4. (g) If a private horse or pack animal dies within the Park, it will be the owner or responsible person's responsibility to remove the carcass from the park or make arrangements for its proper disposal as soon as possible.

***Determination:** Most of Mesa Verde National Park is closed to private horse or pack animal use. With this said, horses, mules, and burros are common livestock traditionally used for transportation, trail rides, and packing in the park. Archeological and historical sites are easily damaged by livestock and require special protection. The requirement that only weed-free feed be used by private horse and pack animal providers is intended to prevent the introduction or spread of non-native vegetation. It has been determined that the use of approved private livestock can be beneficial to the park to complete designated projects and official duties that otherwise could not be completed.*

### **36 CFR Section §2.18 Snowmobiles**

Snowmobile operations/use is prohibited anywhere in the park except for administrative/emergency use.

### **36 CFR Section §2.19 Winter Activities**

(a) Skiing and snowshoeing will be allowed on the Cliff Palace and Morefield Campground loops and the Prater Canyon and Wetherill Road areas, once the roads are closed to traffic for winter and appropriate snow levels are present on the roads.

Pets are prohibited on groomed ski/snowshoeing routes.

### **36 CFR Section §2.20 Skating, Skateboard, and Similar Device**

Using roller skates, roller blades, skateboards, roller skis, coasting vehicles or similar devices is prohibited except in the following street and driveway areas. This pertains to park residents or their guests only:

- Chapin Mesa “Rock House” Residential Area
- Hogan Loop Road Road
- White House Loop Road
- Farview 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 Section §2.21 Smoking**

1. (a) Smoking is prohibited in all government facilities including the park's museum, visitor center and within cliff dwellings and archeological sites, as well as within 25 feet of a public building entrance.
2. (a) 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:** It is NPS policy that public use and administrative facilities be smoke-free. There are no designated employee smoking areas within NPS facilities.*

### **36 CFR Section §2.23 Recreation Fees**

(a) The following areas within Mesa Verde National Monument are designated recreation fee Areas:

- Entrance Station – Entrance Fee
- Visitor Research Center – Entrance Fee (Winter)

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

### **36 CFR Section §2.35 Alcoholic Beverages**

(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:

- All public buildings
- Parking lots
- Archeological sites and cliff dwellings
- All paved surface trails.

The superintendent may authorize the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages as part of a special use event.

***Determination:** Closing these areas to the consumption and possession of alcoholic beverages is for public safety concerns and the orderly management of the facilities.*

### **36 CFR Section §2.36 Gambling**

(a) The general prohibition against any form of gambling or the operation of gambling devices includes the prohibition against the sale of State of Colorado lottery tickets and

maintaining or operating of coin operated electronic gambling devices that pay the winner additional turns.

### **36 CFR Section §2.51 First Amendment Demonstrations**

(e) All areas are designated as open to public demonstrations that involve 25 or fewer persons without a permit. Demonstrations involving 26 or more individuals must have a permit issued by the Superintendent and designated to specific demonstration sites.

Designated Demonstration Sites:

- Chapin Mesa Amphitheater
- Farview: Farview Terrace Parking Lot
- Morefield Campground Amphitheater: Entrance to Campground Amphitheater Trail.
- Visitor and Research Center: Entrance to Welcome Plaza nearest the Handicap Parking Area.

More information can be obtained from the park's Special Use Permit Coordinator.

### **36 CFR Section §2.52 Designated areas for sale and distribution of printed matter for First Amendment purposes**

(e) The following areas are designated as open to the sale or distribution of printed matter. Printed matter is limited to message-bearing textual printed material such as books, pamphlets, magazines, and leaflets, provided that it is not solely commercial advertising.

Designated Demonstration Sites:

- Chapin Mesa Amphitheater
- Farview: Farview Terrace Parking Lot
- Morefield Campground Amphitheater: Entrance to Campground Amphitheater Trail.
- Visitor and Research Center: Entrance to Welcome Plaza nearest the Handicap Parking Area.

The Superintendent will allow free distribution of message-bearing items to the public. Examples of message-bearing items that may be distributed for free include CDs, DVDs

and other readable electronic media. The sale or distribution will not unreasonably interfere with other permitted demonstrations and special events, or program activities.

Designated Demonstration Sites:

- Chapin Mesa Amphitheater
- Farview: Farview Terrace Parking Lot
- Morefield Campground Amphitheater: Entrance to Campground Amphitheater Trail.
- Visitor and Research Center: Entrance to Welcome Plaza nearest the Handicap Parking Area.

### **36 CFR Section §2.62 Memorialization**

The scattering of human ashes is not allowed in Mesa Verde National Park.

### **36 CFR Section §4.30 Bicycles**

(a) Bicycle use within Mesa Verde National Park is permitted only on routes open to public motor vehicle use or administrative roads approved by the Superintendent.

Bicycle use is permitted in the Wetherill Mesa Area:

- Wetherill Mesa - Long House Loop and other marked trails, including the Badger House Community trail. *Bikes are not allowed within the archeological site shelters. Specified trails are open for bicycles, while others are for pedestrians only. Confirm at trail head signs before taking a bicycle on any trail. Bike racks are provided throughout Wetherill Mesa, and at all trailheads.*

(a) Off-trail riding or riding a bicycle off a permitted trail, and entering closed areas is prohibited.

*Determination: Bicycle use is permitted on all roads open to public motor vehicle use. They are not permitted on trails or roads closed to the public.*

### **36 CFR Section §4.31 Hitchhiking**

**(a)** The solicitation of rides by pedestrians, or hitchhiking along any roadway within Mesa Verde National Park is prohibited.

\*These schedules shall be publicized in accordance with 36 CFR § 1.7 Public Notices.