



Foundation Document Overview

Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument

New Mexico



Contact Information

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Purpose



SALINAS PUEBLO MISSIONS NATIONAL MONUMENT protects the archeological and historical significance and values of the Salinas province in central New Mexico by preserving the ruins and artifacts of indigenous pueblos, associated 17th century Spanish Franciscan mission architecture, and 19th century Spanish rancheros.



Significance

Significance statements express why Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument protects exceptional primary archeological resources that date as far back as 1,200 years. Strategically located, these well-preserved and largely unexcavated sites at Abó, Gran Quivira, and Quarai are part of a significant and expansive regional complex of related, early to late pueblo history sites interwoven with archaic history, trade routes, and a long-standing tradition of cultural diversity.
- Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument protects four of the best-preserved 17th century Spanish mission churches remaining in the United States, illustrating the historic meeting of Spanish and indigenous cultures that resulted in a tenuous blending of technology, architecture, and religious beliefs. This earliest administration of the pueblos also led to the strife between church and civil authorities.
- Abó and Quarai played crucial roles in the continuity of cultural traditions that began during the mission period, leading to the history, social life, and architecture of the frontier settlement period in the 19th century, and which continues into the present day. The Salinas Jurisdiction attracted people of many backgrounds. By the mid-1600s, Spaniards and Indians had intermarried. Representing this tradition foremost is the blending of cultures that resulted in the mestizo heritage found among their descendants, who remain in the Salinas area today.
- The cultural landscape surrounding Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument continues to be representative of its prehistoric and historic settings and remains largely unchanged. This landscape that is the Salinas province includes natural resources such as water features, flora, fauna, and salt for which the monument was named, along with the abundance of naturally occurring construction materials that attracted and sustained inhabitants for centuries.

Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Abó (Archeological Resources).** Abó, the oldest pueblo at Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument, represents a unique continuum of land use over some 1,000 years by settlers of the Tompiro people. The site includes pit houses, jacales, prehistoric and historic pueblos, 17th century Spanish Franciscan mission structures, 19th century rancho structures, pictographs, petroglyphs, and other associated sites and artifacts. *San Gregorio de Abó* is the oldest mission in the monument, representing a remarkable example of well-planned and well-designed Southwestern mission architecture and landscape architecture.
- **Quarai (Archeological Resources).** Quarai is the southernmost pueblo of the Tiwa people. The site includes a prehistoric settlement, a large 17th century Tiwa pueblo, a large 17th century Spanish Franciscan mission that served as the seat of ecclesiastical administration in the Salinas province, a small 19th century church and rancho compound, petroglyphs, and other associated sites and artifacts. *La Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Cuarac* mission structures at Quarai represent the greatest volume of mission ruins architecture at a single unit of the monument.
- **Gran Quivira (Archeological Resources).** Gran Quivira, originally known as Las Humanas, is the largest Jumano pueblo of the Salinas province. The site includes pit houses, prehistoric and historic pueblos, 17th century Spanish Franciscan mission structures, 19th and 20th century homesteads, petroglyphs, and other associated sites and artifacts. *San Isidro de las Humanas* and *San Buenaventura de las Humanas* represent the only place in the monument where there are two distinct complexes of colonial-era missions.
- **Preserved Cultural Landscape.** The Salinas basin formed ancient salt beds from which the monument derives its name and drew early inhabitants. Modern visitors highly value the largely unchanged cultural landscape, to include structures and infrastructure, vegetation, viewsheds, and the pristine night skies and natural sounds of the three units of the monument, providing a sense of remoteness and hardship that existed during the Pueblo period. On a clear day at Gran Quivira, visitors can still see up to 100 miles away and as many as seven mountain ranges. One of the most sought after views is the pristine southern view from Gran Quivira and the solitude it evokes.



- **Continuing Cultural Connections.** Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument is deeply rooted in the surrounding Hispanic and pueblo communities. The monument fosters strong ties with these people whose ancestry connects to the monument and dates back centuries. Through its various relationships and partnerships, the monument plays a pivotal role in the preservation of the interconnected landscape, as well as regional education and interpretive efforts. The preservation of monument lands and structures is strengthened by these ongoing cultural connections.
 - **Scholarly Research and Museum and Archival Collections.** Scholarly research and data collection about pueblo and Spanish colonial history using the archeological record, primary documentation, and museum collections contributes to the understanding of historic events and natural resources associated with Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument. The exceptionally important collection of pueblo material culture, colonial mission material culture, art, rare books, and an extensive archeological archival and photographic collection are intrinsically tied to the sites and allow for interpretation based on accurate historical evidence. Notable items within the collection are a number of large ceramic canteens from Gran Quivira—the only canteens of this type known to be found north of Mexico.
- Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.
- **Natural Landscape.** The natural landscape within the boundaries of the monument includes water features, cave and karst geology, vegetation, and wildlife. The monument preserves and restores these features as they complement and support the preservation of the cultural resources of the monument.
 - **Paleontological Resources.** The monument features a variety of fossil resources such as mammoth, tetrapod tracks, marine fossils, and numerous plant and micro fossils.

Description

Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument is a collection of three discontinuous units: Quarai, Abó, and Gran Quivira. Each unit contains distinctive 17th century Spanish missions, American Indian pueblos, and a variety of other historic buildings and ruins. The units are in central New Mexico in a region known to the colonial Spanish as the Salinas Province, named for the valuable salt deposits found there. Through the centuries, this diverse region supported prehistoric hunter-gatherers and puebloan groups, Spanish missionaries, and European American settlers. The people, places, and stories of the Salinas Pueblo Missions reflect a long tradition of cultural diversity, social interaction, and adaptation to a rich, but demanding environment.

Monument headquarters and the main visitor center are in Mountainair, New Mexico. Visitor contact stations, picnic areas, and interpretive trails and waysides are also a part of each of the three units.

