

Agua Fria National Monument:

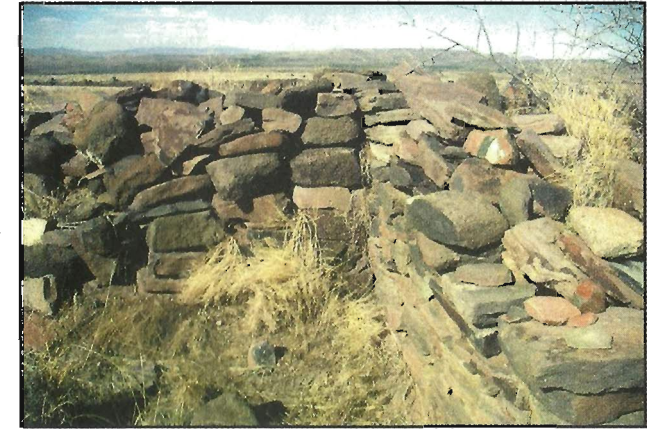
Discover a Desert Oasis of Rich History and Vital Present

At first glance, the desert landscape of the Agua Fria National Monument seems an endless display of sunburned mesas. The silence is broken only by wings of a hawk as it rides the air currents scanning the desert below for its next meal. If you look close, an intimate, living and vibrant landscape appears. Canyons, towering mesas, rolling plains and lush riparian habitats reveal themselves as one passes through the landscape. The Monument's water sources include rivers, streams, creeks and pools, which provide cooling habitat for fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and larger wildlife species such as pronghorn, coyote, javelina, and deer. In addition to plants and wildlife, the careful observer can see pueblos and petroglyphs throughout the Monument, silent reminders of the native people who once lived in this unique landscape



and of modern Indian tribes that regard these sites as a vital part of their heritage.

Taking its name from the Agua Fria River, the Agua Fria National Monument features one of the most significant systems of prehistoric sites in the American Southwest. Today, the 70,900-acre Monument is cared for by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Located within the Monument is the 55,200 acre "Perry Mesa Archaeological District" which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Visitors are invited to take a closer look at this National Monument designated to protect its historic, scientific, and scenic land. The rough and rocky terrain that exists across most of the Monument is the result of lava that once flowed from a volcano. Joe's Hill serves as a reminder of this volcano. Caution should be exercised when walking on this surface as it can be difficult to find a firm foothold.



During the hot summer months, when temperatures often exceed 100°F, afternoon monsoons and lightning storms are frequent. Avoid dangerous situations by knowing the weather forecast before entering the region and arrange activities to minimize possible exposure to lightning danger. Be certain to read all of the safety messages in this brochure, and then discover the Agua Fria adventure.

Archaeology and History:

A Very Special Place

The Agua Fria National Monument contains more than 450 recorded archaeological sites, spanning some 2,000 years of human history. The first Indian settlers were Archaic people, moving seasonally to hunt game and gather wild plant foods. At about A.D. 700, Hohokam farmers established small villages on the mesa tops and along the Agua Fria River. After A.D. 1100, many families left their lowland settlements in central Arizona to establish new villages in upland areas. These uplands included Perry Mesa and Black Mesa, separated by the river's deep canyon.

Archaeologists call the late prehistoric people who lived on the mesas between A.D. 1250 and 1450, the Perry Mesa Tradition people. It is estimated that at least 3,000 people inhabited settlements in areas now visited only occasionally by ranchers, hunters and hikers. Remnants of stone pueblos, some containing more than 100 rooms, represent

a system of communities with economic and social ties. Pueblo la Plata, a large settlement of approximately 100 rooms, attracts many visitors.

The people of the Perry Mesa Tradition abandoned their villages by A.D. 1500, possibly retreating from a drought. Early Spanish explorers encountered Yavapai Indians living in the area, but their relationship to the Perry Mesa Tradition is unclear. In the 1870s, the Yavapai were compelled by the U.S. Army to move to the San Carlos Reservation in eastern Arizona, from there eventually returning to their homeland. Today, Yavapai communities exist near Prescott and Camp Verde.

The late 1800s brought homesteaders, ranchers, and miners to the Agua Fria River and before long, legal disputes erupted over water rights. Cattle, sheep, and goats raised by ranchers supported the growth of Prescott.

While very little mining occurred during the last half of the 20th century, livestock ranching communities continue even today. There are portions of ten ranch allotments within the National Monument's boundaries. Grazing practices must conform to federal standards and guidelines to protect and sustain native grassland and riparian zones.

Many of the National Monument's archaeological sites are in remote and inaccessible areas. Pueblo la Plata is recommended for exploration by visitors, as well as a rock art site at the confluence of Badger Springs Wash and the Agua Fria River. Sadly, many sites have sustained damage from looting and vandalism, however they still provide scientific, educational, and cultural values. Please help protect these prehistoric and historic sites as an important part of the nation's heritage.

Recreation

Explore the Great Outdoors

The Agua Fria National Monument is a rugged, rocky, and remote environment. Cell phone coverage is limited and if available, usually only on the mesa tops. There are no developed facilities such as campgrounds or water fountains. There are pit toilets in the Badger Springs area and one along Bloody Basin Road.

It is best visited during the cooler months of late autumn, winter and early spring. The hot summer months are rough on visitors and require careful planning and safety precautions. Bring lots of water and electrolyte drinks. Watch out for rattlesnakes and be wary of flash floods during summer monsoon storms.

Vehicle travel requires a high-clearance and/or four-wheel drive vehicle. Be sure to have a full tank of gas and know your limitations and the limitations of your vehicle. Roads are rough and rocky and quite impassable when wet.

Information: Visit the Black Canyon Heritage Park, which is a visitor center for the Monument, on Old Black Canyon Highway along the banks of the Agua Fria River located at 35955 South Old Black Canyon Highway, Black Canyon City, AZ 85324.

Viewing archaeological sites: There are literally hundreds of archaeological sites within the Agua Fria National Monument, from large pueblo home sites to rock art panels. You are free to explore and enjoy these treasures but please leave everything as you find it to protect these artifacts for future generations. Walking on the rubble rock walls of ruins is not allowed. Remember that damaging or removing artifacts is a serious crime.

Viewing Wildlife: Observe and enjoy wildlife from a distance. This helps to reduce the stress placed on creatures, particularly nesting birds looking after their young. Feeding wildlife damages their health and alters the animal's behavior.

Hunting and Shooting: Common big game species include pronghorn antelope, white-tailed deer, mule deer, and javelina. The Agua Fria National Monument also provides excellent hunting opportunities for small game species such as Gambel's quail, dove, and rabbits. All hunting activities must follow Arizona Game and Fish Department regulations and hunters must have the appropriate license

and permit. Cross country vehicle travel to collect game is not permitted. Target shooting is not allowed within the boundary of the Agua Fria National Monument.

Hiking: You are free to hike and explore within the National Monument. Hikers are encouraged to practice "Leave No Trace" while hiking or camping. The terrain is very rough and rocky with steep cliffs and canyons and remote areas. Be well prepared with plenty of water and supplies. You may encounter rattlesnakes, scorpions, bears, javelina, or mountain lions. Most areas on the Agua Fria National Monument are for the experienced hiker or outdoors person.

Camping: There are no developed campsites with facilities within the National Monument. Camp in previously used sites. Do not create new sites by driving off-road or clearing vegetation. Your campsite should stay at least 200 feet away from streams and avoid riparian areas. Camping is allowed for up to 14 days.

Know the Rules

If you follow these rules you will protect the National Monument for everyone to enjoy.

Roads: Travel only on numbered designated roads. Driving in washes is not permitted. Mountain bicycles or other non-motorized vehicles must also stay on designated roads.

Artifacts: Do not collect or remove pieces of pottery, stone tools, glass bottles or other artifacts from prehistoric or historic sites. Digging, removing, rearranging artifacts, painting, etching, tracing and defacing petroglyphs or pictographs destroys the site and its story forever. Theft, damage, and vandalism to archaeological sites are serious federal offenses subject to criminal penalties. Do not climb, stand, sit on, or move rocks in these fragile sites.

Geocaching: Geocaching is not allowed in archaeological sites or any area signed as not open for such use.

Pets: Pets must be leashed or under control to protect wildlife from harassment and for the safety of your pet.

Equestrian: Horses or stock animals are not permitted in signed archaeological sites.

Fires: Check with the local BLM office for the status of fire restrictions and pay attention to posted fire restrictions. When campfires are permitted, use existing campfire rings. If no fire ring exists, use a fire pan, fire mound or fire pit. Several wildland fires have been started on the Monument by abandoned campfires. Be certain your fire is completely out before leaving your campsite. Collect only dead, downed, and detached wood.

Sanitation: Bury human waste at least six inches deep and 200 feet from campsites, roads, trails, and all water sources. Better yet, pack out all of your waste, including paper.

Cattle: Grazing is allowed within the National Monument, so watch for cattle on all roads. Please leave gates as you find them.

Hunting: Hunting is permitted within the National Monument. Purchase the appropriate Arizona Game and Fish Department license and permit, and follow all federal and state regulations.

Target shooting, including paintball, is not permitted.

Collecting: Do not collect or disturb natural, organic or inorganic material (except for fish and wildlife taken in accordance with state law, and trash and litter).