

**CHACO CANYON
NATIONAL MONUMENT
New Mexico**

FINAL WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

APRIL, 1969

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is concluded that the lands at Chaco Canyon National Monument are not suitable for wilderness designation, and it is therefore recommended that no wilderness area be established. The monument contains 21,509.40 acres, of which 20,989.35 acres are Federally owned.

It is further recommended that Chaco Canyon National Monument continue to be administered in accordance with the Antiquities Act of June 8, 1906, under which it was created, and with the Act of August 25, 1916, establishing the National Park Service.

These recommendations are based upon a careful study of the monument, consideration of the views presented at the public hearing, and the written responses concerning the preliminary wilderness study report described in the appended Hearing Officer's Report. The roadless area studied is delineated in Exhibit A.

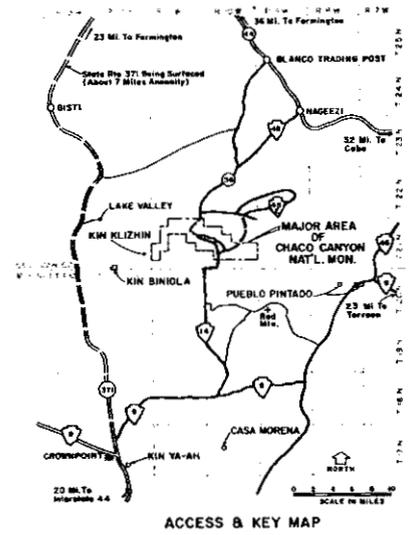
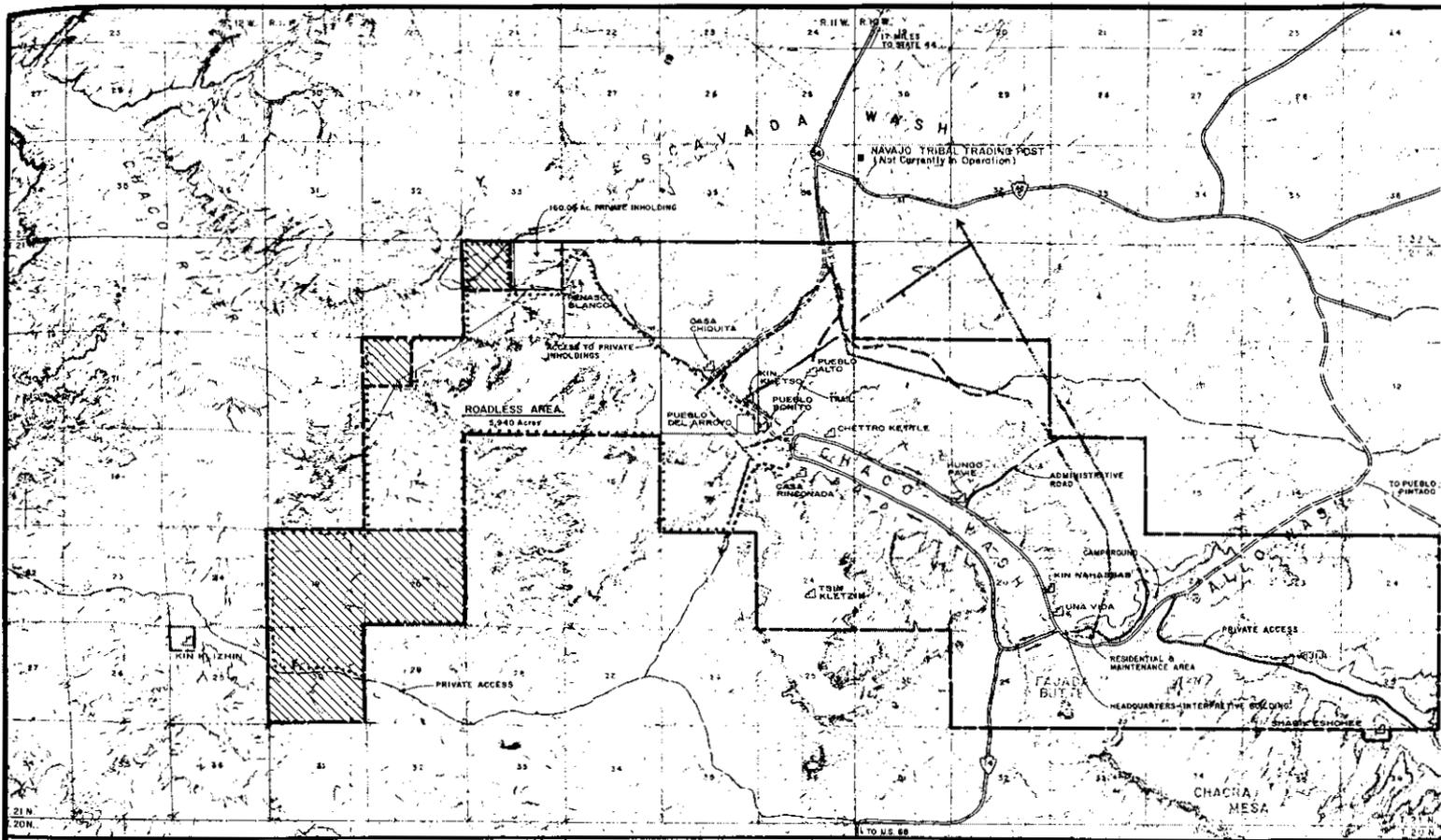


EXHIBIT A

LEGEND

| | EXISTING | PROPOSED | DLITERATE |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| PARK BOUNDARY | — | — | — |
| IMPROVED ROADS | — | — | — |
| ADMINISTRATIVE ROADS | — | — | — |
| AERIAL POWER (SINGLE PHASE) | — | — | — |
| TELEPHONE (W/PALETT) | — | — | — |
| ARCHAEOLOGY | — | — | — |
| BRIDGE | — | — | — |
| FENCE | — | — | — |
| ROADLESS AREA | — | — | — |

NOTE:
 SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH RIGHTS OF ALL OF SEC. 3, 11, 15, R. 11 W., T. 21 N.;
 ALL OF SEC. 17, 21, R. 10 W., T. 21 N.; THE SOUTHERN PART OF SEC. 12,
 R. 11 W., T. 21 N. ARE GRANTED TO THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
 NEW MEXICO.

WILDERNESS STUDY WILDERNESS: NONE RECOMMENDED CHACO CANYON NEW MEXICO NATIONAL MONUMENT





United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

MAR 4 1971

File CHCA

Dept Report

Dear Mr. President:

Section 3(c) of the Wilderness Act (approved September 3, 1964, 78 Stat. 890, 892) directs the Secretary of the Interior to review every roadless area of 5,000 contiguous acres or more in the units of the National Park System and to report to the President his recommendation as to the suitability or unsuitability of each area for preservation as wilderness.

Review has been completed of the 5,940-acre roadless area within Chaco Canyon National Monument, New Mexico, by the National Park Service. Based on that review, I have concluded that this area is not suitable for designation as wilderness by the Congress. Enclosed is a report in support of that conclusion. Also enclosed is a suggested draft of a letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate advising the Congress of the results of this review.

There is a continuing need for archeological research and excavations within this national monument, and such activity will involve the use of mechanized equipment within the roadless area; mineral rights are not owned by the Federal Government in parts of the area; approximately 1,902 acres of the roadless area contain little or no ruins of historical significance and are being considered for deletion from the monument. These factors have led us to conclude that the 5,940-acre roadless area is not suitable for wilderness designation.

Our conclusion is supported by the State of New Mexico, the Eastern Navajo Council, and interested conservation organizations.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary of the Interior

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Enclosures

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 28, 1971

Dear Mr. Speaker:

The Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, declared it to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness, and for that purpose the act established a National Wilderness Preservation System.

In my special message on the environment of February 8, 1971, I stressed the importance of wilderness areas as part of a comprehensive open space system. In these unspoiled lands, contemporary man can encounter the character and beauty of primitive America -- and learn, through the encounter, the vital lesson of human interdependence with the natural environment.

Today, I am pleased to transmit fourteen proposals which would add to the National Wilderness System vast areas where nature still predominates. These areas are briefly described below.

(1) Simeonof National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska -- 25,140 acres of a unique wildlife environment: the biologically productive lands and waters of Simeonof Island off the coast of Alaska.

(2) North Cascades National Park, Washington -- 515,880 acres in two areas in North Cascades Park and Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreation Areas. This nearly impenetrable wilderness includes rugged alpine mountains whose glaciers feed lakes and streams in the virgin forests below.

(3) Isle Royale National Park, Michigan -- 120,588 acres of island wilderness in Lake Superior. Isle Royale is one of the few remaining areas where the North American timberwolf can be found along with other relatively rare species including the moose, beaver, mink and lynx.

(4) Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, California -- 721,970 acres. With its abundant wildlife and groves of giant sequoia trees this area of the Sierra Nevada Mountains is an important site for scientific research concerning natural areas.

(5) Shenandoah National Park, Virginia -- 73,280 acres. The scenic grandeur of the Shenandoah's Blue Ridge is well known. This area is one of the few remaining examples of the vast mountain wildernesses that long ago stood as an obstacle before pioneers pushing westward.

(6) Breton National Wildlife Refuge, Louisiana -- 4,420 acres. The Chandeleur and Breton Islands of the northern Gulf of Mexico, which comprise this wilderness, are an important habitat for nesting shore birds, sea turtles and wintering waterfowl.

(7) Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge -- 4,740 acres. Tropical vegetation, rare bird species, and Key deer native to this area are unique within the United States.

(8) West Sister National Wildlife Refuge, Ohio -- 85 acres. Located just nine miles east of Toledo, this island refuge serves as an important nesting area for egrets, herons, swallows, warblers and a host of other birds. The refuge is an exceptionally primitive landscape compared to the intensive land uses found along most of the Lake Erie shore.

(9) Chamisso National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska -- 455 acres. Located in Kotzebue Sound, this island group contains the largest marine bird nesting colony in northwestern Alaska. During annual migrations, the birds raised in this refuge contribute significantly to the abundance and variety of bird life along the coasts of Alaska, Washington, Oregon and California.

(10) Farallon National Wildlife Refuge, California -- 141 acres. These islands comprise an important sea bird rookery, hosting some 150,000 to 200,000 birds each summer -- including the largest colony complex of cormorants in California. Sea lions also inhabit the area.

(11) Izembek National Wildlife Range and Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska -- 301,451 acres. The tremendous natural biological productivity of this area supports a diverse array of wildlife; it is best known for its use by millions of waterbirds, its unique mammalian fauna and its outstanding salmon spawning waters.

(12) Cedar Breaks National Monument, Utah -- 4,370 acres. Situated on the high Markagunt Plateau of southern Utah, this monument includes a gigantic eroded natural amphitheater whose steep walls time has carved into fantastic shapes of many colors. Subalpine meadows and forests also add to the beauty of the area.

(13) Capitol Reef National Monument, Utah -- 23,054 acres. This monument provides a striking example of the Waterspocket Fold, a great doubling up of the earth's crust. Its spectacular features include a great cliff of brilliantly colored rock layers and dome-like peaks of gray and white sandstone.

(14) Arches National Monument, Utah -- 15,703 acres. Carved from the Jurassic sandstones of the Colorado Plateau, the monument exhibits many notable examples of towers, fins, and deep canyons, and 89 natural rock arches.

In addition to these new proposals, I will also recommend an expansion of the still unenacted Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge wilderness proposal from 319,000 acres to approximately 347,000 acres. This vast swampland, located in Georgia, was originally proposed to the 90th Congress. Its designation as a wilderness area would augur well for the continued existence of the nearly 400 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish that frequent this valuable ecosystem.

In reviewing roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more, the Secretary of the Interior has concluded that two areas which he reviewed are not suitable for preservation as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. These are Chaco Canyon National Monument, New Mexico and Laguna Atascosa, Texas.

Enclosed are a letter and a report from the Secretary in support of these two negative recommendations as well as of the fourteen new wilderness proposals. I concur with the recommendation of the Secretary of the Interior on these sixteen areas.

I urge the Congress to give early and favorable consideration to this package of significant conservation proposals.

Honorable Carl Albert
Speaker of the
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Sincerely,



Enclosures