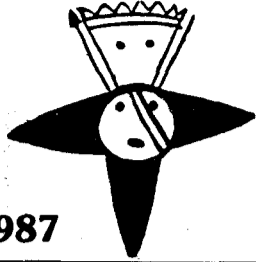


The Escarpment REPORT

August 1987



PROGRESS ON NEW MEXICO'S PETROGLYPHS NATIONAL MONUMENT

CITY AND PARK SERVICE STUDIES OUT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW



After more than a year of work, both the National Park Service and the City of Albuquerque have produced plans for protection of the Northwest Mesa Volcanic Escarpment with its magnificent array of prehistoric Indian and colonial Hispanic rock art.

The good news is that both studies identify an alternative for cooperative planning, acquisition, and management of a new Petroglyphs National Monument, and this approach is publicly favored by City officials and U.S. Legislators.

The bad news is that land acquisition costs for the new National Monument may range between \$44 million to \$61 million, and assembling that kind of money will take time, no matter how the costs are parcelled out. Land owners don't want to wait in limbo, and preservationists fear delays will mean piecemeal losses to vandalism and the intense development pressures which already have pushed subdivisions, highways, and public works projects in some

areas right up to the base of the escarpment.

The NPS study will be finalized in early September, and then referred to Office of Management, Department of Interior, and Congress. Even under the most optimistic scenario, legislation wouldn't be introduced until early 1988. Passage by the end of the 100th Congress would require a minor legislative miracle on the part of Senator Pete Domenici and Representative Manuel Lujan. Funding would doubtless be incremental over a 5-10 year term, and come from existing NPS funds for land acquisition.

Conservationists are pinning their hopes on a faster track for funding from the City. Imposition of a 1/4% gross receipts tax would raise \$12-\$15 million per year. The City Council and Mayor presently are considering three bills with different formulas to parcel out revenues from the 1/4%. Although all three bills contain some monies earmarked for City-wide open space acquisition and management, competition with other City needs is keen. Without strong grassroots lobbying pressure,

open space funding may be inadequate in whatever taxation package is finally approved in early September, 1987.

Revenues from the 1/4% gross receipts tax would start quickly in January, 1988. The City would then issue revenue anticipation bonds to produce immediate, up-front capital in the amounts necessary to begin acquisition of escarpment lands. Options could be held on southern escarpment lands targeted for NPS acquisition, giving Congress time to act. City commitment of a substantial portion of 1/4% revenues to escarpment preservation would prove a powerful lobbying tool in persuading Congress to match City efforts.

In the horserace between development and preservation, funding issues tend to eclipse resource values for the West Mesa petroglyph area. While the City study places more emphasis on local development controls within their zoning authority, the NPS study takes a close look at the resources and their significance from a national perspective. Some exciting information has emerged.



View of Rinconada Canyon looking west toward the volcanoes: from left to right are JA, Black, and Vulcan. The serenity and relative isolation of the Rinconada makes it perhaps the most pristine area remaining along the escarpment. Good wildlife and

plant community values remain. The northern half is in public ownership as part of the La Boca Negra Park purchases, and the southern half is in single ownership under management of Westland Development Corporation.



A bullet-damaged petroglyph concentration in inner Rinconada Canyon. A shield anthropomorph has evidently been used for target practice, resulting in a spray of bullet scars. Notice the plain, three-hole circular mask on the rock's very edge, possibly a Koyemshi mask. Putting masks on the edges of rocks in this fashion is common to the Rio Grande and Jornada styles of rock art, and may indicate something to do with the spirit-being's "all-seeing" or "seeing in both ways" powers. The mask with a bird perched on top is a common association all along the escarpment.



A beautiful star being mask with feathered headdress and two marks obliquely across the face. Note also the projectile point as part of the feathered crown, underscoring the star beings connections with various Pueblo Ceremonial Warrior Societies. This petroglyph is on one of many lots along the base of the escarpment which may be very close to receiving utilities. This particular star being is on a lot which could not be developed without cutting into the rocks where the petroglyphs are located.

ROCK ART: The NPS estimates that between 15,000 to 17,000 petroglyphs adorn the 17-mile long escarpment edge, making this the largest concentration of prehistoric rock art near a major city in the entire world. Although a small number may be in excess of 3000 years old, and the early Pueblo Periods I-III (AD 600-1300) are also represented, the NPS estimates that 70-95% of the petroglyphs belong to the richly dramatic Rio Grande Style, which dates from the recent Pueblo IV Period (AD 1300-1680). Unlike other more obscure styles of rock art, the Rio Grande Style can be interpreted. Visitors will see kachina masks, horned water serpent beings, fluteplayers, starbeings, clan symbols, and other petroglyphs directly reflecting contemporary ceremonial arts of the Pueblo peoples. The rock art of the West Mesa is a dramatic display of the religious roots of Pueblo culture.

Over 250 examples of colonial Hispanic rock art also are found along the escarpment, mostly beautiful cruciforms reflecting different ritual aspects of the Catholic mass.

Archeology: Together with over 60 archeological sites and shrines along the escarpment edge, the petroglyphs are included in the Las Imágenes Archeological District listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Zuris-Mann

1100-room Pueblo site just a mile east of Piedras Marcadas has been determined eligible for Register listing. And the Boca Negra Cave site in Volcano Park has been recognized by listing on the National Register. Numerous water control features, field houses, and bedrock grinding surfaces called metates attest to the agricultural importance of the escarpment to the Anasazi farmers. Modern Pueblo groups still use certain areas for religious purposes, as well.

Education and Research: Located adjacent to two major interstate highways and the largest metropolitan area in New Mexico, a Petroglyphs National Monument offers an unparalleled opportunity to showcase the two principal cultural traditions of New Mexico on their own home ground. The NPS also recommends consideration of a rock art research center in addition to a visitor center. Not one of the 338 National Park System units presently features America's vast heritage of rock art as a principal interpretive theme. Establishment of the new Monument would fill this conspicuous void in the thematic framework of our National Parks.

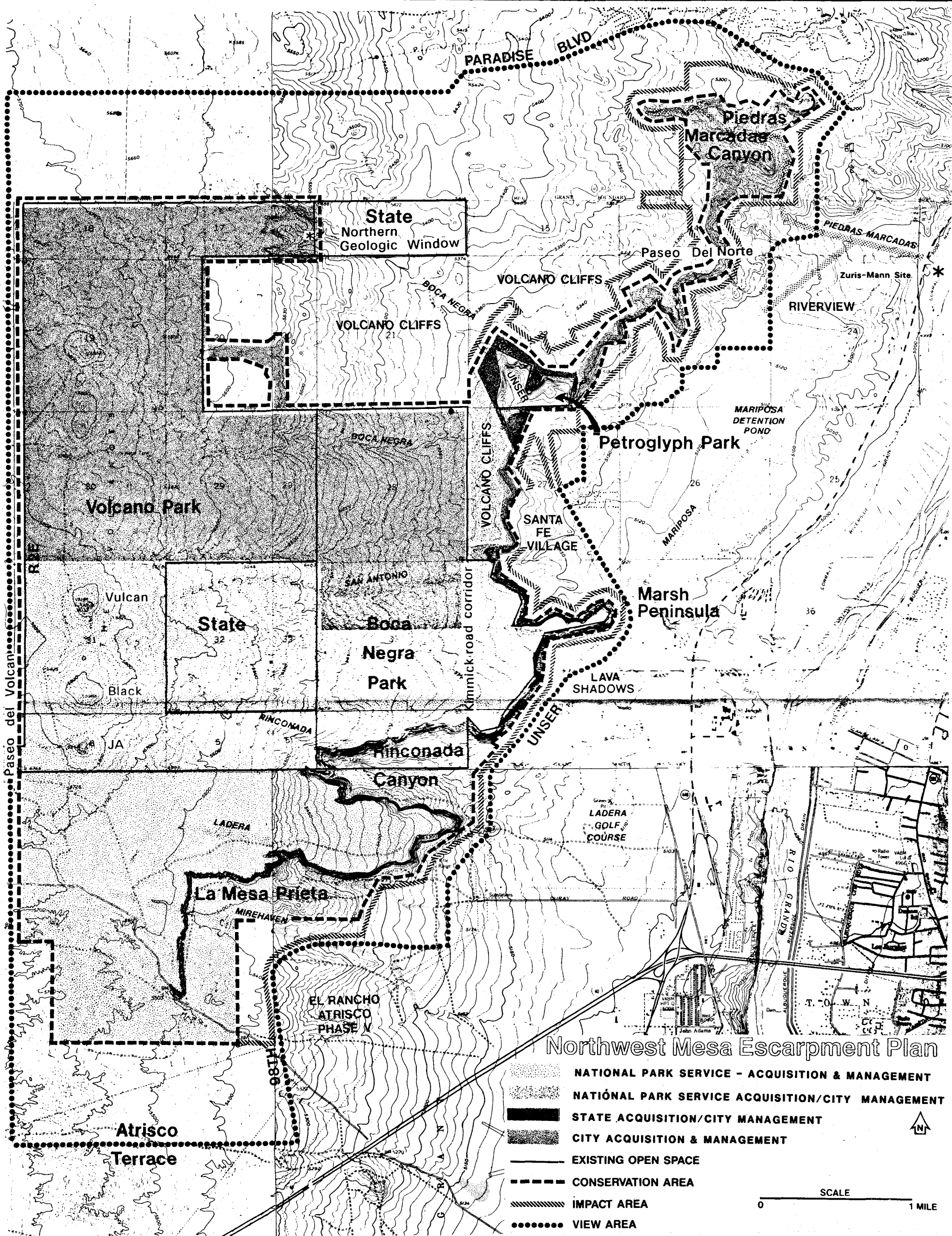
Tourism: Linked with other sites on the Congressionally-proposed Masau Trail Automobile Tour of ancient Anasazi and contemporary Pueblo areas, a

Petroglyphs National Monument would become an integral part of a regional tourist system designed to educate visitors to the Southwest's cultural history, and keep them in New Mexico a few days longer.

Geology: A series of six volcanic eruptions 190,000 years ago created the West Mesa's unique landscape. Geologists have recently discovered that the earth's magnetic field at that time was recorded by crystals of iron-bearing minerals in the basalt, and was radically different from its present orientation. The West Mesa's paleomagnetic record has global significance.

Two other features of the Albuquerque volcanoes are nationally significant: 1) Three erosional windows located on the branches of Boca Negra Arroyo expose all lava flows. These windows or "kipukas" help geologists map the extent of each flow, and present a dramatic cross-section of flow types to the visitor; 2) The five volcanic cones, particularly JA and Vulcan to the south, are uniquely composed of a mixed variety of lava flows, cinder cones, and spatter or dribble features.

Vegetation and Wildlife: The escarpment has special ecological significance as an ecotone with more richly varied plant life than surrounding areas. Many animals find shelter, nesting sites, and



The City of Albuquerque's West Mesa Escarpment Plan recommends adding 2906 acres within the Conservation Area to the existing 4454 acres already publicly owned mostly in Volcano and Boca Negra Parks. Impact and View Areas would set design guidelines to harmoniously transition surrounding development into the resulting 7360-acre public area.

Both the National Park Service Alternative #2 and the City Plan recommend creation of a new National Monument to be jointly acquired by City, State, and Federal governments. The Park Service would manage 4195 acres centered around La Mesa Prieta, Rinconada Canyon, and the three southern volcanoes. The City would manage the remaining 3165-acres in the northern portions of Volcano and Boca Negra Parks, an expanded Indian Petroglyph State

Park, the northern geologic window, and the great Piedras Marcadas Arroyo area.

Major visitor centers would be located just north of I-40 at the escarpment's southern tip for the NPS and just north of Paseo del Norte road to access the Piedras Marcadas Arroyo area at the escarpment's northern end for the City. Interpretive facilities may also be located at Vulcan volcano, the Rinconada Canyon entrance, and Indian Petroglyph State Park.

Legislation authorizing the monument would include a strong statement of purpose, and require the preparation of a general management plan jointly done by City, State, and Park Service.



A humpbacked fluteplayer figure of Kokopelli, Pueblo god of the earth's reproductive mysteries. Kokopelli goes back perhaps 2000 years in Anasazi rock art, and is also found in pottery, kiva murals, and kiva earth figures. The antennae-like horns on Kokopelli's head may signify his animal form as a cicada. The diminutive figure on the end of his phallus may be a kokopelli mana, or female consort of the god. The very large feet are unusual.



One of Rinconada Canyon's spectacular serpent beings, this one masked with cloud-column horns or feathers, and rattles on the tail. The shorter masked serpent also has a lightning body, and a projection on the right side of the mask which may be an open bird's beak.

good hunting there, including coyote, bobcat, gray fox, desert kit fox, long-tailed weasel, and a variety of rodents and reptiles. A species of millipede found nowhere else in North America has been discovered recently in Petroglyph Park. Resident birds include scaled quail, road runner, great horned owl, marsh hawk, red-tailed hawks, and burrowing owls.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Since both City and Federal governments will be involved in creating the new Petroglyphs National Monument, there is something for everyone to do, whether or not you live in Albuquerque.

Everyone can write and/or call their Congressional leaders and support the Park Service Alternative Plan #2 for a National Monument or National Historic Park. Urge that the northern volcanoes be added to the Monument in order to protect Native American religious uses. Since Alternative Plan #3 would bring development so close to the escarpment as to preclude any chance of Park Service involvement, you should specifically oppose that alternative. Finally, urge that Congress act with all possible haste to approve legislation with funding for immediate acquisition and protection of the petroglyph area.

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If you live in or around Albuquerque, phone your City Councilor (768-3100) and leave a message in support of the 1/4% for Open Space, specifically mentioning the West Mesa. If you don't know your Councilor's name, leave the message for Council President Pat Baca whose Bill O-141 is currently the best one for open space. Also call the Mayor's Office (768-3000) and leave the same message.

Then check your calendar for August 10, 18, 19, 20, and September 1: the City Council will hold public hearings on the 1/4% tax increase on each of those dates at 7pm, except for September 1st at 4pm. August 10 and September 1 will be in Council Chambers at City

Hall; August 18 at Del Norte High, August 19 at Highland High, and August 20 at West Mesa High. Try to attend one or more of these hearings and speak out in support of the 1/4% for Open Space. The final Council action on the tax package will come on September 9th.

You can also help circulate 1/4% for Open Space petitions, flyers, and bumper stickers. Call (505) 255-7679 for the materials.

Finally, letters to the Editors of the Albuquerque Tribune and Journal are needed in support of a 1/4% tax limited to no more than five years to purchase the Volcanic Escarpment, the proposed botanic garden site, the Zuris-Mann Pueblo site, and the Rounds Estate in the Sandia Foothills. All these lands are threatened with imminent development, and will be lost without immediate acquisition. Write to P.O. Drawer J (for Journal) or P.O. Drawer T (for Tribune), Albuquerque, NM 87103. —Ike C. Eastvold

