Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument

Location: The Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument includes approximately 4,114 acres of federal land and is located in north central New Mexico near Santa Fe. Elevations within the monument range from about 5,560 feet to about 6,760 feet above sea level.

Description: The Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument is a remarkable outdoor laboratory, offering an opportunity to observe, study, and experience the geologic processes that shape natural landscapes, as well as other cultural and biological objects of interest. Rich in pumice, ash, and tuff deposits, the light-colored cone-shaped tent rock formations are the products of explosive volcanic eruptions that occurred between 6 and 7 million years ago.

The complex landscape and spectacular geologic scenery of the Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument has been a focal point for visitors for centuries. Human settlement is believed to have begun near the monument as a series of campsites during the Archaic period, from approximately 5500 B.C. During the fifteenth century, several large ancestral pueblos were established in the area. Their descendants, the Pueblo de Cochiti, still inhabit the surrounding area. Although the Spanish explorer Don Juan de Oñate reached the Pajarito Plateau in 1598, it was not until the late eighteenth century that families began to claim land grants around Tent Rocks from the Spanish Crown. Remnants of human history are scattered throughout the monument.

Management: The monument will continue to be managed by the Bureau of Land Management, in cooperation with the Pueblo de Cochiti and Sandoval County, for the predominant purpose of protecting the objects for which the monument has been created. This designation is subject to valid existing rights and will not affect state or private property.

Process: In May 2000, Sandoval County petitioned Secretary Babbitt to consider recommending the Tent Rocks area as a national monument. Since then, the community has developed an overwhelming support for protecting the area. In December 2000, Senator Bingaman asked Babbitt to travel to the area and meet with the local community. The tour and meetings in December demonstrated the high level of support this designation has among the community. Senator Domenici, Congressman Udall, Bernalillo County, Santa Fe County, City of Rio Rancho, Community Association of Placitas, the University of New Mexico Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences and the Pueblo de Cochiti also support this designation. On January 8, 2000, Secretary Babbitt recommended to the President that the area be designated a national monument. President Clinton designated the area as a national monument on January 17, 2001.