



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# Protecting the Legacy and Culture of the Chaco Canyon Landscape

In addition to its incredible beauty, the Chaco Canyon area is one of the world's most unique and culturally significant landscapes. Located in the high desert of northwest New Mexico, this valley served as the center of the Chacoan culture for a roughly 400-year span, from 850 - 1250. The sophistication of this culture is clearly visible in the grand scale of the architecture set in a landscape of sacred mountains, mesas, and shrines that have deep spiritual meaning to this day.



Guadalupe Ruin Chacoan Cultural Site

Credit: BLM

Today, much of the Chaco Canyon area is protected as Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The park and six other sites nearby were designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987. The broader landscape surrounding the park is made up of lands that also have important cultural resources, sacred sites and values to surrounding communities, and are owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Navajo allottees, the State of New Mexico, and private individuals.

The Chaco landscape also contains significant oil and gas deposits and solid mineral resources. Approximately 90 percent of BLM-managed energy and mineral resources in the area are leased, in addition to more than 40 percent of those managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

## Protecting Greater Chaco

Today, President Biden and Secretary Haaland are taking steps to ensure that the legacy of Chaco Canyon is protected for decades to come. The proposed withdrawal would establish a ten-mile buffer around the Park, removing the possibility of additional federal oil and gas leasing and new mining claims across hundreds of thousands of acres of public lands managed by the BLM. Valid existing rights in the area will not be impacted. A broader collaborative process to begin in early 2022 will bring Tribes and Pueblos, Native organizations, elected officials, and other

