

Fremont Indian State Park and Museum



Utah State Parks

One thousand years ago, the canyon along what is now Interstate 70 near Sevier, Utah, was home to one of the largest communities of Fremont Indians ever discovered.



Their rock art is still visible on the canyon walls. A film, hands-on activities, rock art tours, and exhibits reveal the culture of the Fremont Indians. The park also offers camping, hiking, and access to the Paiute ATV Trail.

The Fremont People

The Southern Paiute call them Moki and Mu:kwitsi people, or Mokwic, meaning, “the small people.” Archeologists called them “Fremont Indians” because the first Fremont site was identified along the Fremont River. We do not know what they called themselves. We do not even know if all the people living in Utah, Colorado, Idaho, and Nevada that we call Fremont all spoke the same language or were known by the same name.

Though there is still much to learn about them, we have discovered a lot through archeology. The Fremont were preceded by hunters and gatherers who traveled seasonally and slept in alcoves like the Sheep Shelter (trail #9). About 2,000 years ago, the people began to grow corn in addition to hunting and gathering. They also started to hunt with bows and arrows in addition to atlatls (spear throwers), make pottery, and eventually build homes called pithouses in communities. Some think these new technologies spread to Utah by word-of-mouth while others argue that people migrating north brought these new things with them.

The Fremont Indians who settled in Clear Creek Canyon, with its ample water and marshes, enjoyed a more diverse diet than Fremont living elsewhere in the region. They ate cattails, marsh fish, and birds which meant they did not rely as heavily on farming and hunting. In their spare time they sewed hides into clothing; built and painted pottery; coiled intricate baskets; and crafted stone tools. Their unique figurines and rock art with lively images of animals and people hint at their beliefs about the world.

History

After the Fremont left this canyon, the Paiute, Ute, and Shoshone tribes traveled seasonally through it to hunt and gather seeds and pine nuts. The trail they used through Clear Creek Canyon was the best route between hunting areas on opposite sides of the Pahvant and Tushar Mountain ranges. As they traveled through, they added to the rock art on the canyon's walls, recording stories of their culture and their interactions with the new technologies brought west. Carvings of trains, horses, and houses can all be found here.



The Paiute Trail through Clear Creek Canyon was later used by settlers and explorers such as Jedediah Smith in 1826. The trail was improved into a wagon road in 1872. In 1877 the first year-round homesteaders, John Smiley Lott and his two wives, settled in the canyon. A school was built for the Lott's grandchildren in 1895. In the 1890s, gold was discovered on Kimberly Mountain, making Clear Creek Canyon an important route to the railroad at the nearby town of Sevier.

During the 20th century, most families here relied on employment out of the canyon rather than farming. The majority left in the 1980s when Interstate 70 was built. Fremont Indian State Park and Museum opened in 1987.

Park Guidelines

Please observe the following park regulations to ensure everyone has a pleasant visit.

1. Attention! Federal law protects all historic and prehistoric features.

Do not touch rock art! Do not pick up objects you may find on the ground!

2. Stay On Designated Trails.

3. Camping is only permitted in designated areas. Each camping permit covers one vehicle and attached recreational unit. It is unlawful to dump or drain wastewater from campers or trailers onto the ground or into lakes and streams.

4. Quiet hours: 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.

5. Off-highway vehicles are permitted on Clear Creek Canyon Road and the Paiute ATV Trail. Obey all state regulations and posted signs.

6. Fires may be built in specified areas. There is no gathering of firewood allowed in the state park.

7. Pets are permitted in outdoor areas but must be kept on a maximum 6-foot leash. SERVICE ANIMALS are the only animals admitted in park buildings. For safety and courtesy, please keep pets under control and clean up after them.

8. Plants, animals, minerals, and all other natural resources are protected in state parks. It is unlawful to remove, alter, or destroy them.

9. Fireworks, explosives, and firecrackers are prohibited.

10. Litter can be placed in garbage bins located at the museum, campgrounds, and trailheads. Please leave the park in better condition than you found it.

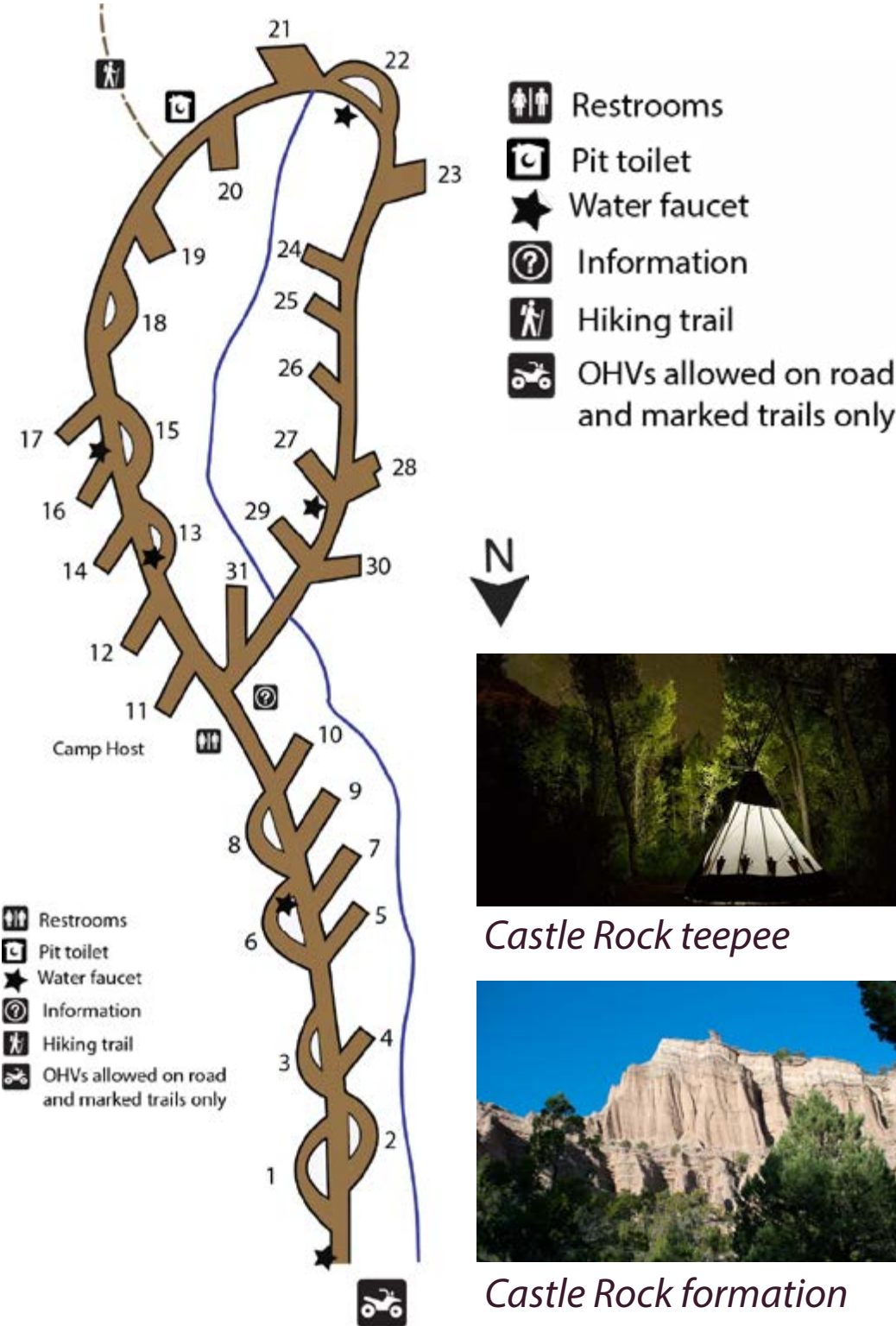
Sam Stowe Campground



Secluded from the rest of the park, Sam Stowe Campground offers numerous camping options including seven RV sites with full hookups, two cabins, a group area and modern restrooms with showers. Our newest addition to the campground is a modernized pithouse that gives visitors a

taste of what sleeping in a pithouse would have been like for the Fremont. Hiking trails, petroglyphs, and fishing access are also nearby. Sam Stowe Campground offers direct access to the Paiute ATV Trail.

Castle Rock Campground



Located in a quiet canyon surrounded by towering geological formations, Castle Rock Campground provides 31 campsites each with a picnic table, fire pit, and barbeque grill. A small stream flows year-round nourishing thousands of trees that provide shade to campers. Water is available near all campsites and modern restrooms are open April through October. Off-highway vehicles are allowed in the campground, which offers direct access to the Paiute ATV Trail.



Reservations

Reservations are always recommended. Individual campsite reservations must be made at least two days in advance of arrival date, but can be made up to 16 weeks in advance of park check-out. Group-use reservations may be made up to 11 months in advance. To make a reservation, call 800-322-3770 or visit stateparks.utah.gov.

Camping Regulations

Each camping permit covers one vehicle and attached recreational unit. It is unlawful to dump or drain wastewater from campers or trailers onto the ground or into lakes and streams.

Quiet Hours: 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.

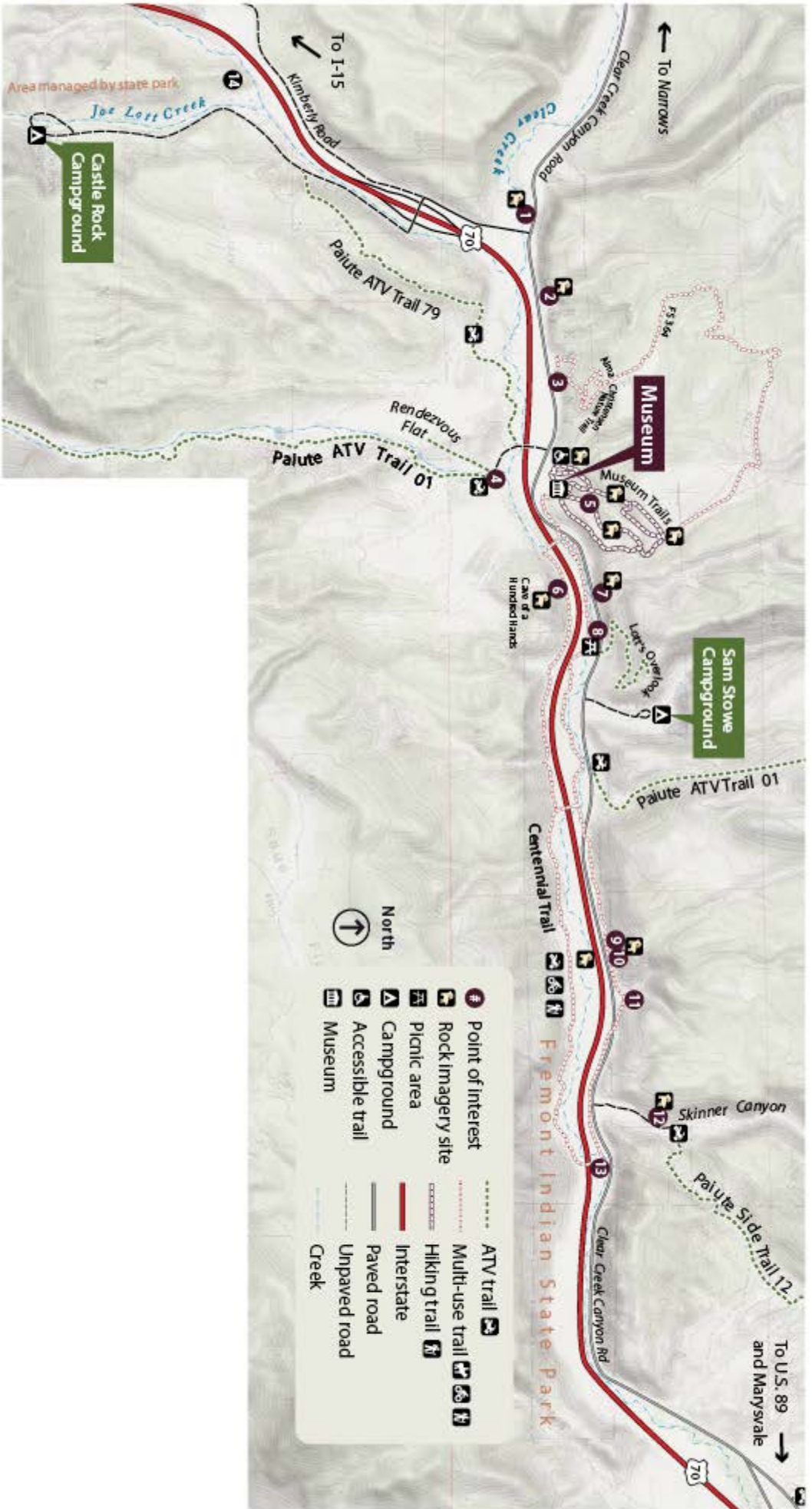
Explore From Here

Forest Service Trail 051

This is an out-and-back Forest Service trail that is not maintained. The trail continues 10 miles up the mountain. Most hikers stay along Joe Lott Creek and turn around when the trail splits from the creek. The trail begins near the top of the campground loop near the vault toilets and campsite #20.

ATV Trail 79

This ATV trail connects Castle Rock Campground to the Paiute ATV Trail. It also gives access to the museum and other trails in the state park. OHVs are allowed on all roads in the state park and marked OHV trails only.



❶ Newspaper Rock Viewpoint

This viewpoint offers the best look at Newspaper Rock, the canyon's most famous panel, with more than 1,000 images carved into



it. We are not

sure who dubbed this panel Newspaper Rock but it shares its name with another Newspaper Rock near Canyonlands National Park in Southeastern Utah. More rock art can be seen from this viewpoint by following the cliff line. Hiking up to the panel is prohibited but binoculars can be borrowed from the visitor center.

❷ Canyon of Life Rock Art Trail

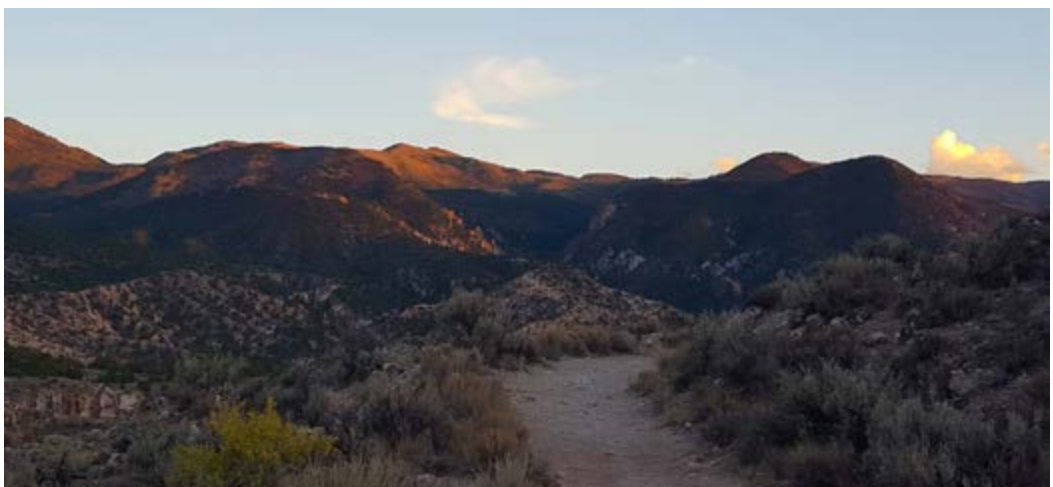
This short, unimproved **0.18-mile** trail begins with an immediate ascent to an open, flat canyon. There are two sets of panels in this area. The first can be found to the west on the highest rocks of the north face of the canyon's small inlet. Walk from here to the east end of the canyon to find a large panel that seems to contain a wheel. Though we do not know its exact meaning, it appears to be a

summer solstice panel. From here there are 28 more panels to the south and east.



③ Alma Christensen Nature Trail

This trail is a **1-mile loop** with views of the ecosystem above the canyon floor. There are no rock art panels along the trail. The first section of the trail is steep but the view of surrounding pinyon and juniper covered mountains makes it worthwhile. The trail is relatively easy after that. At the junction with FS 364 you can turn north onto the unmaintained trail and reach the museum after 2 miles or continue on the loop. This trail's namesake, Alma Christensen, lived here from 1917 to 1944. His family home doubled as a boarding house, restaurant, and school. They had the only telephone in the canyon.



④ Max Reid Trailhead



This trailhead provides access to over 700 miles of connected OHV trails. Please make

sure to display your day-use tag in your vehicle while on your ride. In addition to giving access to OHV trails, the parking area lies directly east of Five Finger Ridge, the site where a large Fremont Village was discovered. Feel free to hike to the top and imagine the view the Fremont people enjoyed from the village they built on it.

⑤ Fremont Indian State Park Museum and Trails

Step back in time as you ponder the artifacts in our collection that reveal the lives of those who used this



canyon: Fremont Indians, traders on the Old Spanish Trail, Mormon settlers and miners looking for gold. Kids will enjoy our Discovery Zone where they can examine ancient tools and explore a Fremont pithouse.

Wander in our gift shop and pick out a souvenir to remember your adventures. Behind the museum is a network of trails to rock imagery sites. Check out the detailed museum trail map and descriptions in the next section of this guide.

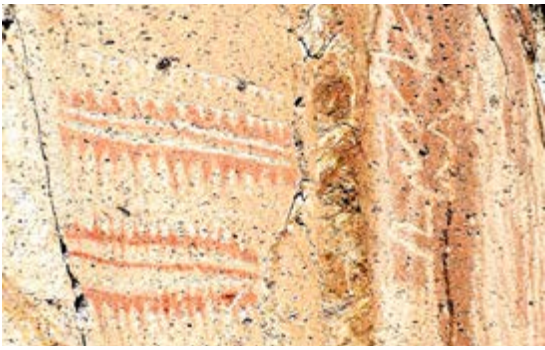
⑥ Cave of a Hundred Hands



You can get to this cave in two ways. If you want a shorter hike, drive to the trailhead

0.1 miles east of the museum parking lot along the frontage road. From the trailhead the hike to the cave is 0.3 miles. If you would like to extend your hike to 1-mile round trip, start at the southeast corner of the museum parking lot. From there the trail switchbacks down the slope and runs parallel to the frontage road until it reaches the trailhead. The 31 handprints and other pictographs in this cave are visible through bars that protect them from further defacing. Excavations revealed that the Fremont used the cave while the village on Five Finger Ridge was thriving, though no one lived in it.

⑦ Arch of Art Viewpoint



From this viewing area along Clear Creek Canyon Road, the striking shape of the cliff curves to look like

a stone rainbow. This rock formation is covered in unique rock art including a rare pictograph (pictured left). This pictograph is painted in red triangular designs, while the opposing white triangles and lines are carved out. Archeologists think the designs were made by the Fremont because of how similar the rock art is to Fremont pottery. During the soft light of winter in the morning and late afternoon, vivid images of birds, deer, bighorn sheep, a badger, and a line of human figures (are they dancing, hunting, or performing a ritual) are clearly seen on this rock formation.

⑧ Centennial Picnic Area and Cabin

This picnic area offers a shady spot to eat with views of Clear Creek, access to the Centennial Trail, and fishing. The area is reservable for group day use and includes picnic tables, fire rings, water,

shade, and restrooms. The cabin located here was moved from Junction, Utah in 1995. Census records show it had been inhabited since at least 1903, though some locals claim it was built as early as 1885.

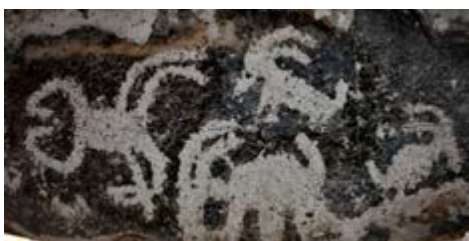
The cabin that was built on this spot by Joe Lott in the early 1880s looked very



similar except with smaller windows and a more simple chimney. It was home to Joe, his wife Merua and their six children.

🕒 **Sheep Shelter Trail**

The Sheep Shelter can be viewed at the end of a short, but steep 0.05-mile hike starting from the parking area. The Sheep Shelter Trail is also located along the Centennial Trail, which gives access to several other panels. This shelter was excavated 7 feet below the surface level where archeologists found a hearth at the bottom of this alcove dated to 3700 B.C. The layers above it showed occasional use



from then through the Fremont period. The petroglyphs in

this alcove include several bighorn sheep and a possible scorpion. To view them, you will need to look into a mirror placed on the back of the alcove's wall. On the back of the cave wall a line extends the entire width of the shelter with different points marked by semicircles and dots. We think this may have been a place where prehistoric people observed the sky and marked their findings.

⑩ Indian Blanket Viewpoint

To view this pictograph, walk up the trail and make a left when you see the view benches. If you need help seeing it, look through the view finding pipe in the ground. The largest rectangular pictograph is 150 feet above the canyon floor, 16 feet long and 4 feet high. To the right of it, there is another smaller geometric petroglyph. It is called a blanket because it reminded the first Mormon settlers who passed through the canyon of blanket designs. These geometric designs are also found on rock art panels in the canyon and are similar to the designs found on Fremont pottery.



11 Jedediah Smith Interpretive Site

Stop at this interpretive site to learn about Jedediah Smith and the Old Spanish Trail that



passed through this canyon. Archeologists think Jedediah Smith may have come through here in 1826 because that date is carved into the canyon walls next to a "JS."

12 Skinner Canyon Rock Art Sites



There are two rock art sites located in Skinner Canyon.

To get to the first panel, drive 0.2 miles into the canyon to

a parking area on your left. A portion of the panel has fallen but the other portion is visible behind the rubble. From this parking area continue on foot. Another panel can be found to the east where the ATV trail comes into the canyon. The animals depicted here are unique for Clear Creek Canyon and possibly include desert bighorn sheep, deer, elk, and moose.

13 Canyon Geology Viewpoint



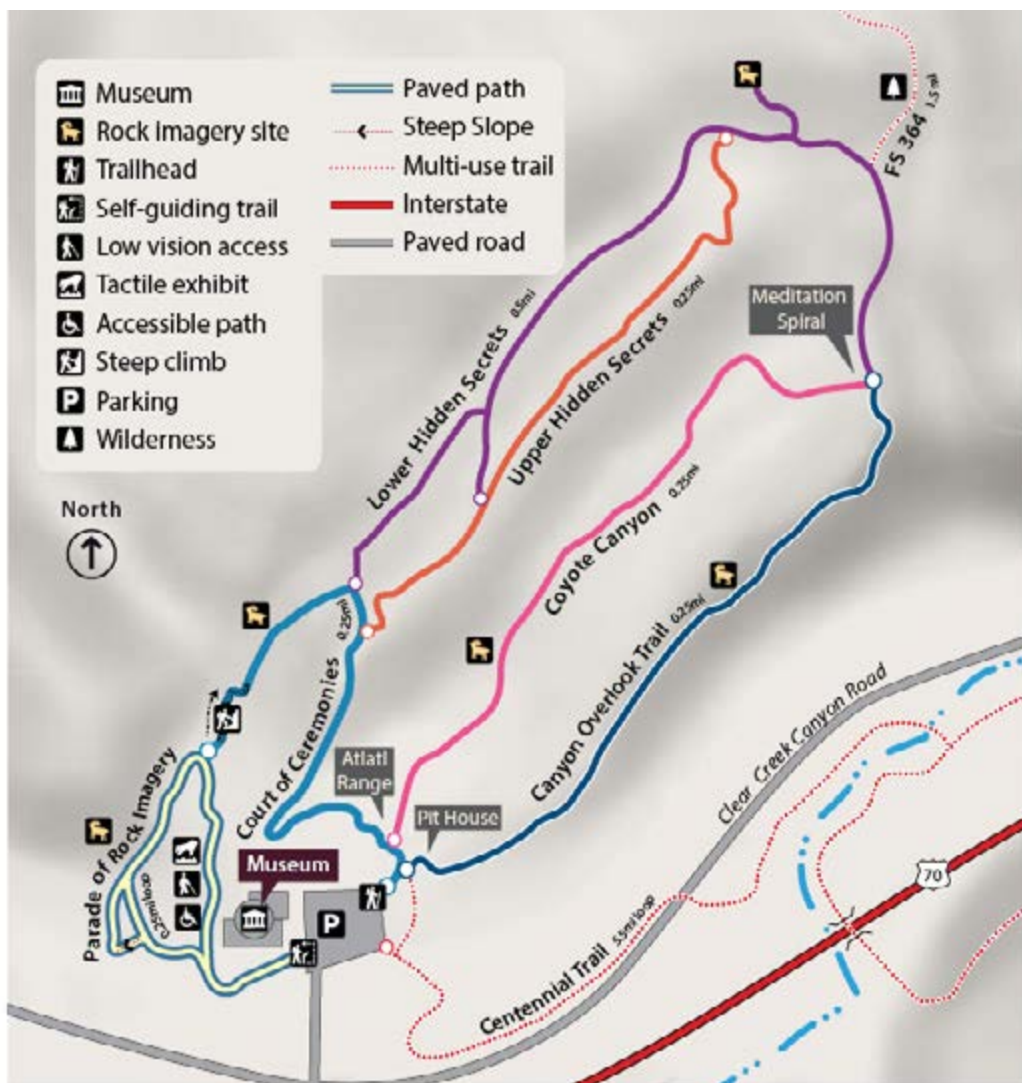
The view from this spot near the mouth of the canyon is ideal for observing the geology of the canyon and specifically the columnar joints of the volcanic tuff (ash)rock. Tucked away on one of these ledges, just out of sight, is a granary that the Fremont people used to protect their food.

14 Belknap Ranger Station Interpretive Site

This interpretive site is located on the road to Castle Rock Campground.



Belknap Ranger Station was first built here in 1915. Eventually a barn, a garage, and a cold storage carved out of rock were constructed as well. These ranger stations gave U.S. Forest Service rangers a place to sleep as they patrolled on horseback. Each of the building's foundations are still visible and can be explored.



Parade of Rock Art Trail



This 0.2-mile paved loop is the perfect place to start your exploration of the park. It is the most accessible and the only paved path in the park. It offers views of 20 rock art panels. You will discover depictions of animals and people from long ago. Please stay on the pavement and do not wander up to the rock art.

By staying on trails and viewing rock art at a distance, you are protecting these cultural treasures. Even the oils on your hands will damage them.

Court of Ceremonies Trail

This 0.26-mile trail can be accessed from the Parade of Rock Art Trail or from the the east end of the museum parking lot. The trail is steep in several areas and more easily accessed from the parking lot. From the Parade of Rock Art access point, rock imagery panels are visible on both sides of the steep climbing steps. At the top of the stairs, six different figures are visible along the canyon walls.



Coyote Canyon Trail

The Coyote Canyon Trail starts from the reconstructed pithouse at the corner of our parking lot and follows a moderate slope up the canyon 0.3 miles to the Meditation Spiral. Along the way you may find a small rock art panel and several experimental granaries that were built in 2001 to see how they weathered overtime.



Hidden Secrets Trail

The Hidden Secrets Trail connects the Court of Ceremonies to Coyote Canyon, Canyon Overlook, and the FS 364 trails. The 0.25-mile Lower Hidden Secrets trail follows along the canyon floor. The 0.5-mile Upper Hidden Secrets trail following the ridgeline is the more popular route and has a clearer footpath. The highlight of this trail is a petroglyph panel on the north end of the loop. Take the a spur trail that goes toward the cliff. There you will find images that include an intricate spider web pattern, a shield figure, wavy lines, several people, bighorn sheep, and animals.



Canyon Overlook Trail

This **0.27-mile** multi-use non-motorized trail ends at the Meditation Spiral. The trail meets up with the Hidden Secrets and Coyote Canyon Trails at the spiral. Take your time and enjoy the scenery as you wind your way to the spiral's center. All along this Canyon Overlook Trail are beautiful views of the canyon looking east toward Monroe Mountain.

The view of I-70 is reminiscent of the trails and roads that have passed through this canyon for thousands of years. This is the connection route between the Centennial Trail and the FS 364 trail.

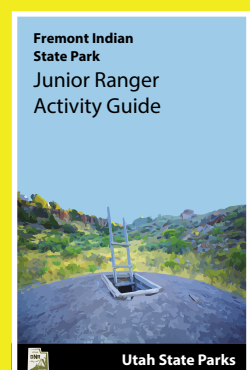
Centennial Trail

This 5-mile dirt trail is a great way to hike or mountain bike your way through the park. The northern section of the loop winds along the creek and will take you to more rock art panels than this guide identifies. The southern portion of the loop is a challenging nature hike that will get you close to the cliffs with beautiful views of the geology, past the the Cave of a Hundred Hands, and under the Indian Blanket pictograph.



Become a Junior Ranger!

Youth between the ages of 5 and 13 are invited to become Fremont Indian State Park Junior Rangers! You may become a Junior Ranger by completing an activity booklet available at the visitor center.



Hiking

Hike our beautiful canyon and wonder at the petroglyphs



etched in stone, the colorful pictographs, and the rare pictoglyphs that cover its walls. Enjoy unique geological formations around every corner. Look out for columnar jointing, hoodoos, and bubble caves. Trails range from .25 to 5 miles in length and lead to further exploration of the surrounding mountains by connecting to the Fishlake National Forest. Hiking trails are for non-motorized use only.

Paiute ATV Trail

One of the most impressive ATV trail systems runs right through the middle of Fremont Indian State Park. Trailheads and parking are located within the park. The Max Reid Trailhead features parking, picnic tables, shade, water, a fire pit, and an informational kiosk. Maps of the ATV trail are available in the visitor center and camping is restricted to Castle Rock Campground.

Plants and Animals

Clear Creek Canyon is home to many animals such as deer, cottontail rabbits, squirrels, and raptors. Among the more elusive animals living in the area are mountain lions, bobcats, ringtails, and foxes. Though rarely seen, beaver are plentiful and leave their mark as seen by the many fallen trees and dams. Beware of rattlesnakes, which are sighted frequently in summer months.



Among the pinyon, juniper, scrub oak, and cottonwood trees, visitors will find rabbit brush and sagebrush.

Geology

The formation of Clear Creek Canyon started around 19 million years ago with the eruption of Mount Belknap, located 12 miles from the park. Explosions sent a hot cloud of ash and rock fragments into the air, covering the surrounding landscape. Look closely at the rocks here, especially the white ones, and you can see rock fragments embedded in the solidified ash. These eruptions, along with erosion, filled in ancient valleys and created two

rock formations: Joe Lott Tuff and the Sevier River Formation. Tuff is a general term describing rock material ejected from a volcanic eruption. The Sevier River Formation is made up of layers of siltstone, sandstone, and conglomerate. Both of these formations are relatively soft and easily erode. Over tens of thousands of years these formations were eroded into the canyons, cliffs, and hills we see today. In Castle Rock, the hoodoos are made up of the Sevier River Formation. A visible white band in the rock is a layer of ash that fell from the sky during an eruption.



Safety

Rattlesnakes: Rattlesnakes are passive and prefer to be left alone. They rattle to alert their presence and avoid confrontation. When encountering a rattlesnake, give it space and move along slowly.

Heat: Carry plenty of water, wear a hat, and use sunscreen.

Hiking: Never hike alone. Stay on designated trails. Rock climbing is prohibited.

Creeks and Streams: During springtime when winter snows are melting or after heavy rainstorms, Clear Creek becomes dangerous. Keep a safe distance and always make sure children are supervised.

Charges

Use Charges: Day-use and camping are charged year-round. Additional charges are charged for group events and reservations.

Permits: A special use permit is required for all special events, concessions, drone use, and commercial/professional filming or photography.



Contact Us:

Fremont Indian State Park and
Museum
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Email: fremontindian@utah.gov

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram



Hours of Operation:

The visitor center is open every day except Thanksgiving and Dec. 24-25. Hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Extended summer hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Memorial Day-Labor Day).

Closed Sundays in winter.

Directions:

The visitor center is conveniently located along Interstate 70 at exit 17. The park is 21 miles south of Richfield and 17 miles east of Cove Fort (junction of I-70 and I-15).

*Information contained in this brochure was accurate at the time of printing. Information may change as mandated. For updated information, please contact the park. 06/2024