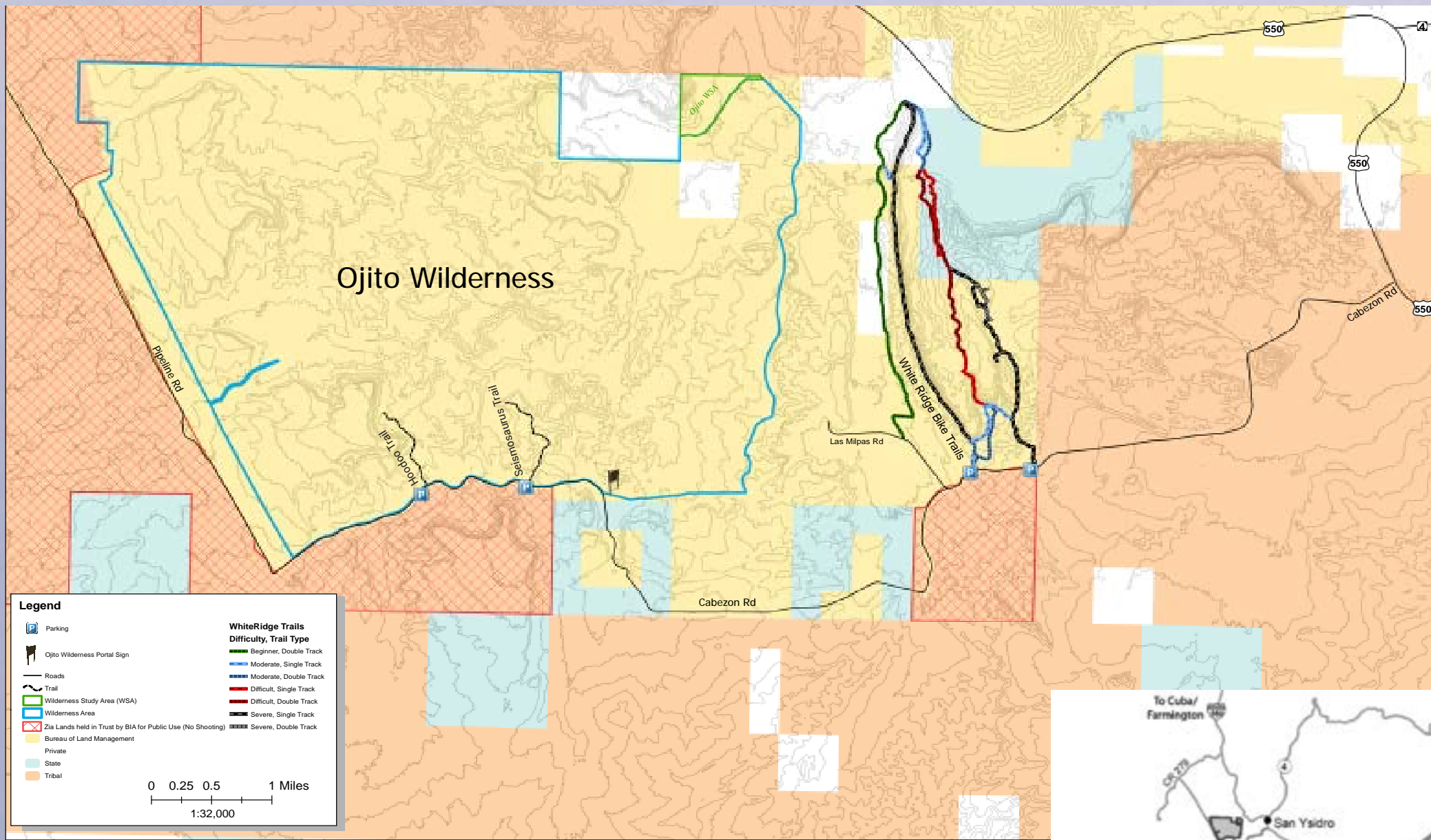


# Ojito Wilderness



Bureau of Land Management  
Albuquerque District  
Rio Puerco Field Office  
100 Sun Ave., N.E.  
Pan American Bldg., Suite 330  
Albuquerque, NM 87109  
505/761-8700  
or  
[www.blm.gov/new-mexico](http://www.blm.gov/new-mexico)

In case of emergency:  
BLM Rio Puerco Law Enforcement – 505/761-8700  
Immediate Emergency – 911  
BLM 24-hour Santa Fe Law Enforcement – 505/827-9377

For interactive maps and more detailed information about  
this area please go to  
[www.blm.gov/new-mexico/rio-puerco-kiosk](http://www.blm.gov/new-mexico/rio-puerco-kiosk)

## Welcome to the Ojito Wilderness!

**“In wildness is the preservation of the world.”**

*-Henry David Thoreau*

An hour northwest of Albuquerque is the Ojito Wilderness, a high desert landscape of wide open spaces and exceptional beauty. This area of steep-sided mesas, remote box canyons, meandering arroyos, and austere badlands offers solitude, tranquility, and escape from the congestion of the city. The Ojito Wilderness Act of 2005 permanently protects over 11,000 acres of scenic wilderness as a promise to the future that there will always be places to find beauty and renewal.

Once part of a vast river channel and floodplain complex that was eventually inundated by inland seas, the Ojito Wilderness boasts world-renowned fossils—dinosaurs, trees, plants, and marine invertebrates. Erosion has over time exposed the bones of huge dinosaurs, large segments of petrified trees, as well as leaves and seashells. Because these fossils provide significant information about ancient life, it is important that they are left undisturbed until they can be collected by professional paleontologists. Collecting fossils in wilderness is prohibited by law unless authorized by a permit issued to a qualified researcher.

Several human cultures have tried to carve a living from Ojito's sparse resources, including the Ancestral Puebloan, Navajo, and Hispanic cultures. The rugged terrain, rocky soils, and scarce water supply may have contributed to a difficult life. The prehistoric and historic ruins and artifacts left by these inhabitants are the clues that archaeologists use to tell

the story of existence here. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act and other laws protect both ruins and artifacts. Please leave them undisturbed for others to enjoy, and for future archeologists to study.

### ACTIVITIES

The steep canyons and rugged cliffs of Ojito can provide rewarding challenges to experienced hikers, but even novices can enjoy this spectacular area by venturing just a short distance from the road. Deep meandering arroyos offer miles of terrain in which to wander. Visitors can enjoy wildlife viewing and bird watching, as well as horseback riding, sightseeing, and photography. Rock layers in the canyon walls and cliffs enhance all of these activities, especially when exposed to the sun's rays at dawn and dusk.

Backpacking and primitive camping are allowed, and do not require a permit. Permits are, however, required for commercial guiding, outfitting and filming as well as educational and organized groups. Permit applications are available at the BLM office in Albuquerque and on-line at [blm.gov](http://blm.gov).

Hunting, managed by the New Mexico State Department of Game and Fish, is allowed within the Ojito Wilderness. Ojito is located within New Mexico Big Game Management Unit 9.

### LOCATION/ACCESS

From Albuquerque, travel north on I-25 approximately 16 miles and exit on U.S. 550 (second Bernalillo exit). From Santa Fe, travel south on I-25 approximately 40 miles to U.S. 550 (first Bernalillo exit). Travel northwest on U.S. 550 about 20 miles toward Cuba. About 2 miles before San Ysidro, turn left onto Cabezon Road (County Road 906) and follow the left fork 10 miles to the Ojito Wilderness sign.

Ojito's south and west boundaries are accessible by dirt road. Always know where you are traveling and where you have been because it's easy to get lost in the hundreds of miles of dirt roads surrounding Ojito.

### PLANNING YOUR TRIP

There are no facilities within or adjacent to the Ojito Wilderness. The Village of San Ysidro, approximately ten miles away, offers the closest facilities and services.

The Ojito Wilderness is a roadless area that visitors must accept on its own terms. Visitors are responsible for their own safety and must be prepared to take care of themselves. Cell phones often don't work; let someone know your plans.

Water is rare in this dry land and no water is available at most times within the Ojito Wilderness. Bring plenty of water. Dress in layers because of the unpredictable weather.

Access roads in the area are passable during dry weather but they can get slippery and rutted during wet seasons, normally spring, late summer, and winter.

BLM 1:100,000 land status maps (Albuquerque and Los Alamos) available at local BLM offices, provide more detail than the map in this brochure. U.S.G.S. 1:24,000 maps (Ojito Spring, San Ysidro, Sky Village NE, Sky Village NW) provide even greater detail for the serious hiker.

Some areas within and near the wilderness boundaries are private, State, Pueblo of Zia, and Zia Recreational Trust lands. Be sure to obtain permission before you enter or cross private or Pueblo lands. The State of New Mexico requires an annual recreation permit for access to State lands ([www.nmstatelands.org](http://www.nmstatelands.org)).

Zia Recreational Trust is open for primitive recreational uses; however, shooting and cross country driving are not allowed.

Fire restrictions are sometimes placed on BLM lands, including the Ojito Wilderness; call the BLM Albuquerque office for information. Camp stoves are recommended.

### RULES

Wilderness areas are closed to all motorized and mechanical forms of transportation, including mountain bikes.

All visitors and users of the Ojito Wilderness are subject to Federal recreation regulations found in 43 CFR 6300 and 8360, and Supplementary Rules for Designated Recreation Sites, Special Management Areas, and Other Public Lands in the Albuquerque District Office. In addition, there are specific Federal and State laws protecting such resources as fossils, archeological resources, plants, and mineral resources, as well as governing general visitor conduct. It is your responsibility to know and obey the laws, rules, and regulations.

Protecting land as wilderness is a legacy to the future. When you visit a wilderness, you should be aware of your impacts on the land and keep these impacts to a minimum. The Leave No Trace Program was developed to provide guiding principles for backcountry uses of all types to address such impacts. The Leave No Trace principles include:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Camp and travel on durable surfaces
- Pack it in, pack it out
- Properly dispose of what you can't pack out
- Leave what you find
- Minimize use and impacts of campfires
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate to other visitors

