



COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNITS
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Natural and Cultural Crossroads: An Environmental History of Pecos National Historical Park

This project highlights the flexibility and fluidity of CESU partnerships. Research conducted by Colorado State University allowed the National Park Service to reassess cultural landscapes within the milieu of environmental history and helped resource managers develop a Resource Stewardship Strategy (RSS).



■ **Learning from the past to protect the future.** Environmental Historians Cori Knudten, Maren Bzdek, and Dr. Mark Fiege helped Pecos National Historical Park integrate natural and cultural resource management strategies. *(John Reber/NPS)*

The Public Lands History Center at Colorado State University began research for *Crossroads of Change: An Environmental History of Pecos National Historical Park* in 2008. The report synthesized the history of the park and examined cultural interactions as a catalyst of environmental change. From prehistoric history, to Spanish missions, and cattle ranching, Pecos National Histor-

ical Park provided researchers with ample opportunities to reassess the convergence of cultures upon a shared landscape as a means to explore environmental change over time. By researching the park's cultural and natural history, researchers traced the impact of historical events upon the land and examined culturally significant features and resources within the landscape.

Colorado Plateau Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit

■ Project Partners



■ Project Contacts

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■ Project Reports

*Pecos National Historical Park:
Integrated Resources Stewardship
Strategy (Natural Resource Report
NPS/PECO/NRR-2011/408. Fort
Collins: National Park Service (2011)).*

■ Project Type

Research
Technical Assistance

Research to Resource Management

The environmental history provides a nuanced view of cultural and natural resources that serves as a resource tool for park managers. Researchers composed a useable report that influenced the development of the park's Resource Steward-

ship Strategy and embraced a holistic approach to managing cultural and natural resources. By blending both cultural and natural resources, the environmental history provides a context that reveals the interrelations between cultural and natural resources at Pecos National Historical Park.



■ **12,000 years of history.** Just 25 miles southeast of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the piñon, juniper, and pine woodlands of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, Pecos National Historical Park protects the remains of an Indian pueblo and also showman Tex Austin's Forked Lightning Ranch. Austin built the ranch trading post, shown above in the 1920s, on the remains of Kozlowski's Stage Stop and Tavern, which served the Santa Fe Trail between 1858-1880. (courtesy/NPS)



Stepanie Guerra wrote this project spotlight in August 2011. It was part of an education project between Colorado State University and the CESU Network National Office. Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units provide research, technical assistance, and education to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies and their partners. Their broad scope includes the biological, physical, social, cultural, and engineering disciplines needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context. There are seventeen CESUs, each composed of federal agencies, a host university, and partner institutions, which are linked together in a CESU network. For more information, see www.cesu.org or contact Dr. Thomas E. Fish, CESU National Coordinator, at tom_fish@nps.gov.