

The Adventurers' Companion: Sand Canyon Pueblo

Sand Canyon Pueblo tells us much about the stress and turmoil that engulfed the Anasazi during the thirteenth century. Originally built over a thirty-year period beginning around 1240, the Pueblo was abandoned about 1285 following a catastrophic attack that killed the residents. Sampling just 20% of the pueblo, archeologists found the unburied remains of 31 people killed in a single catastrophic attack. Broken arms, smashed skulls, and dismembered bodies all evidence a violent end and further excavations might well uncover the remains of the entire population.

Significantly, there is no evidence of foreign attackers. Archeologists have concluded that people from surrounding villages destroyed Sand Canyon, probably in a bid to control natural resources.

Getting There

Begin your visit at the Anasazi Heritage Center in Dolores, Colorado. The Center serves as the Monument headquarters and houses a superb museum. Center staff can provide directions, information about current road conditions, and an informative site map.

Getting to the site is a little tricky because there are no Monument signs along the route. Much of the trip is on county roads; most are graded dirt and gravel. They are passable in typical passenger vehicles, but you should avoid making the trip after significant rains and snowfall.