

# Two World Heritage Sites; One Fortified Border

Visitor Experience and Management  
of Two Pre-Columbian Sites on Both  
Sides of a Fortified Border

# Two Pre-Columbian UNESCO World Heritage Sites Straddle the US-Mexico Border

An obvious difference between the two sites was dictated by available construction materials.



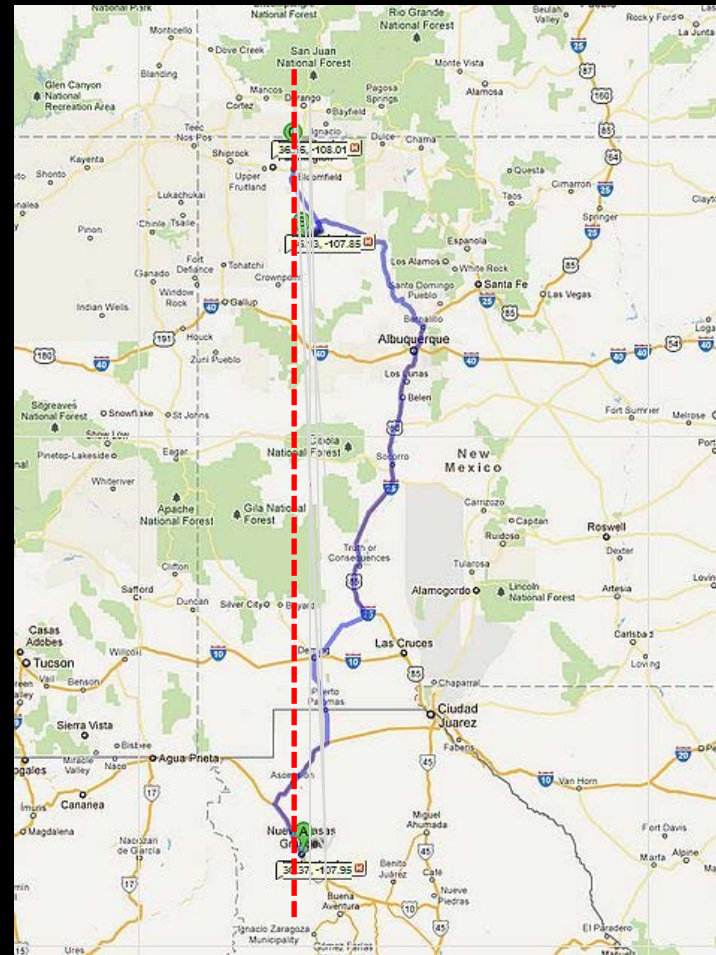
Chaco: Stone  
Active 850-1250  
Inscribed 1987



Paquimé: Adobe  
Active 1060-1340  
Inscribed 1998

While this is not an archaeological presentation, there are various qualities that link them.

- Both are positioned along -108 degrees west.
  - This has been described by archaeologist Steve Lekson as the “Chaco Meridian.”
  - The importance of astronomical functions in the layout of these sites suggests their position along 600 km of territory in two present-day countries is hardly a coincidence.
- There is ample evidence of trade and cultural exchange along this pathway.



Whether or not the two ceremonial and commercial centers are directly related, they are both evocative of the cultures that evolved in what are now northern Mexico and the southwestern United States.

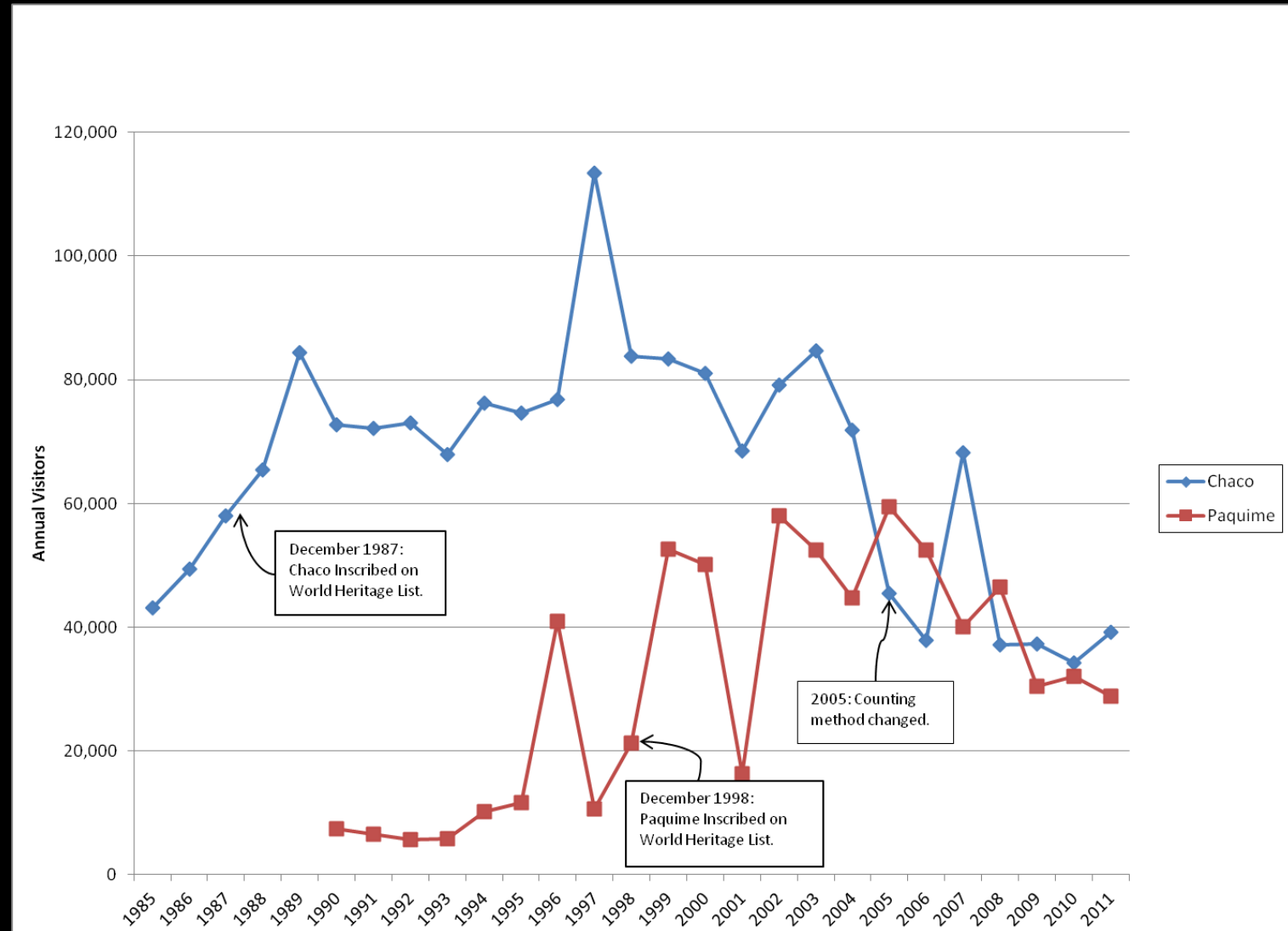


# These similarities invite comparisons. As UNESCO World Heritage Sites, how do they compare:

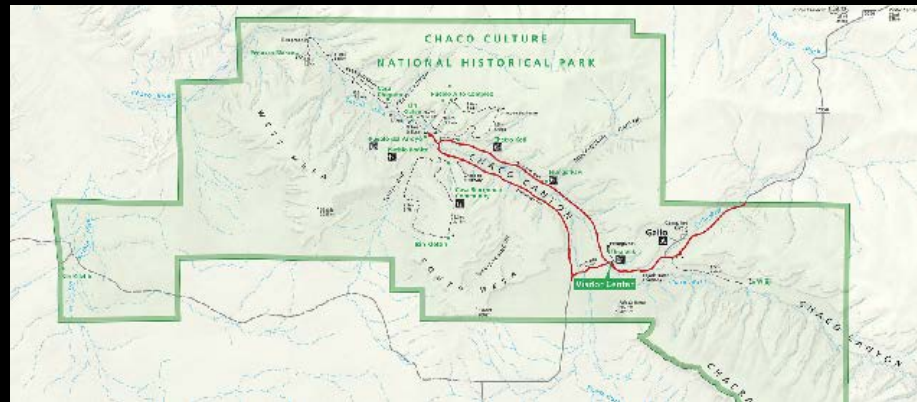
- ... with respect to visitor levels?
- ... with respect to management issues?
- ... with respect to the visitor experience?



# Prevailing wisdom suggests inscription on the World Heritage List Causes increases in Visitors.



In Chaco's case, the nature of the park and the visitor experience means increased visitation is undesirable.



- The park covers 53 square miles (137 square km) contains 4,000 archaeological sites, 37 of which are open to visitors.
- Chaco “is managed to provide independent and contemplative visitor experiences, along with opportunities to explore the prehistoric cultural sites.”
- Given this huge site and the lightly supervised hands-off attitude toward visitors, park attendance must remain limited.

# The enormity of Chaco Culture NHP invites behaviors that compromise the site's integrity.

## Rules:

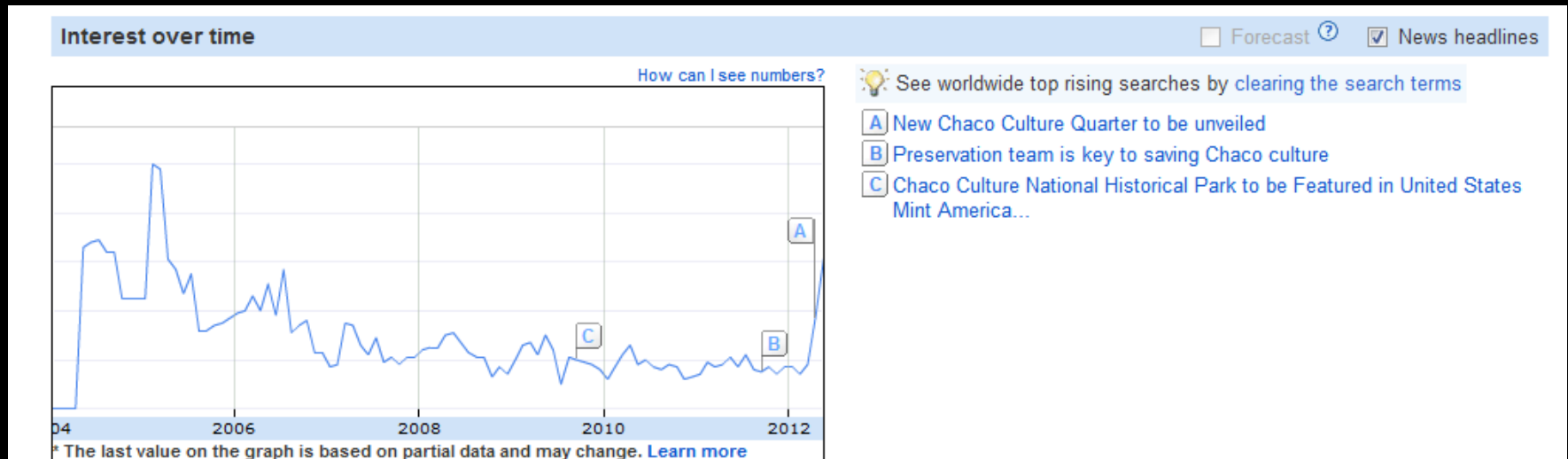
- Do not collect pottery or other protected artifacts, plants, or rocks.
- Do not deface, add to, or alter petroglyphs, pictographs, or rocks.
- Do not walk, climb, sit, or lean on fragile walls.



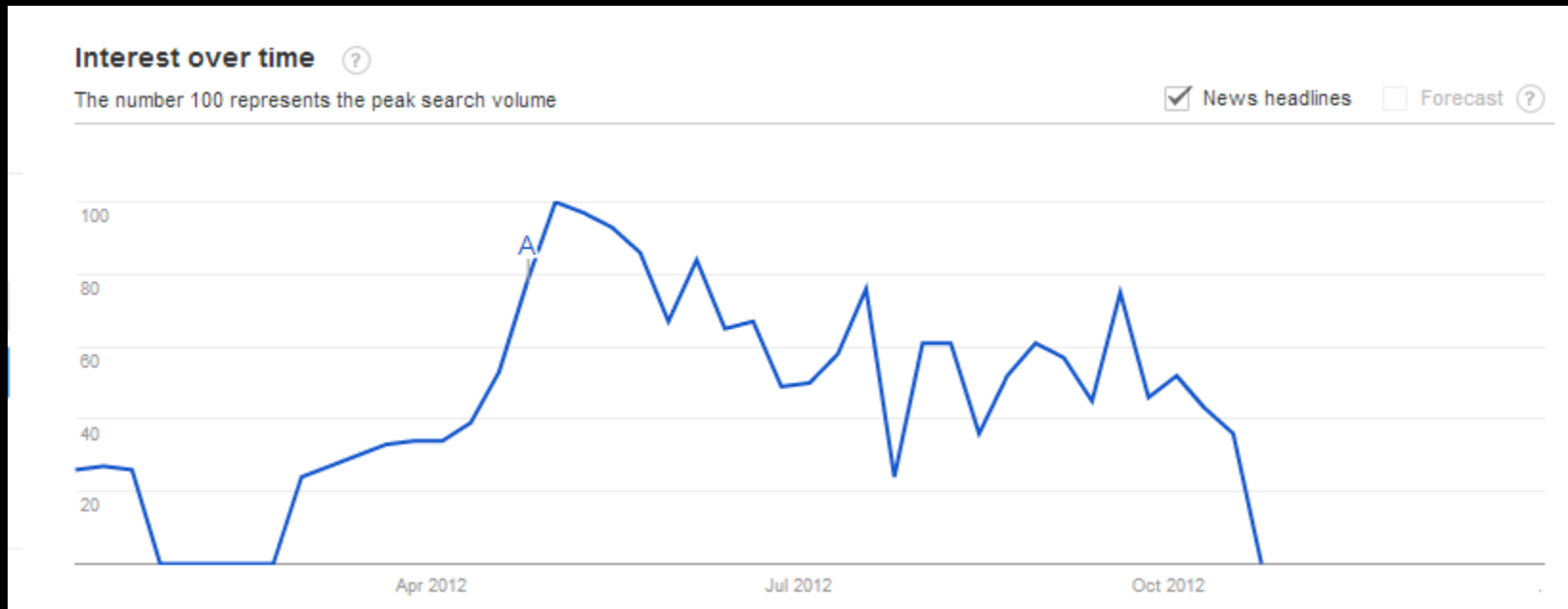
A collector.



If a tiny percentage of the 44 million Chaco Culture quarters minted in the America the Beautiful series stimulate a visit, park attendance doubles.



# The effects of the coin appears to have peaked.



# Improved Access Threatens Chaco.



- A proposal by San Juan County, New Mexico, would pave the final 13 miles on CR 7950 from US Route 550.
- Improved access for buses, motor homes, and discomfort-averse visitors implies 35% increases in annual visits, excluding normal growth.
- Since 2005, the Chaco Culture NHP annual budget has grown at 1.3% annually.

# Proposed amendments to Chaco's management plan seek to limit visits and modify visitor behavior, while still permitting independent experiences.

## – Group Visits

- No more than two per day.
- Required reservations.
- Groups greater than 20 required to disperse around the park.

## – Camping

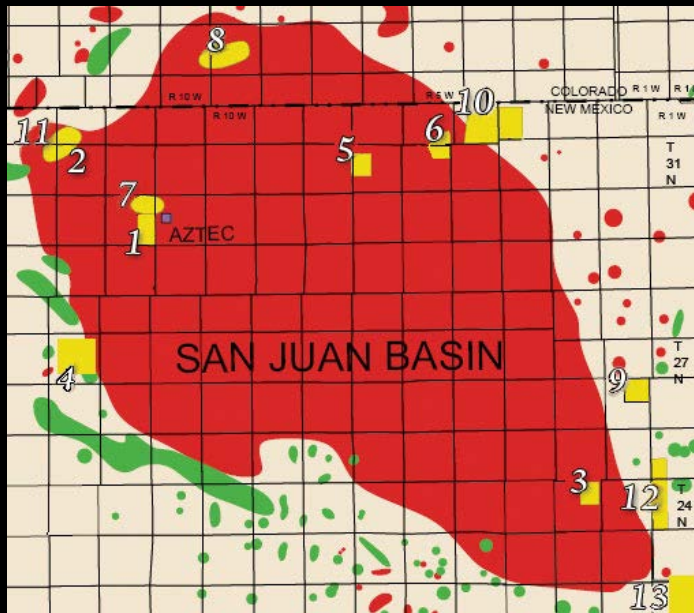
- Reservations would be available.

## – Visitor Education

- All visitors would be required to attend a structured education program prior to entering principal areas.
- Increased ranger activity would supplement the initial education program.

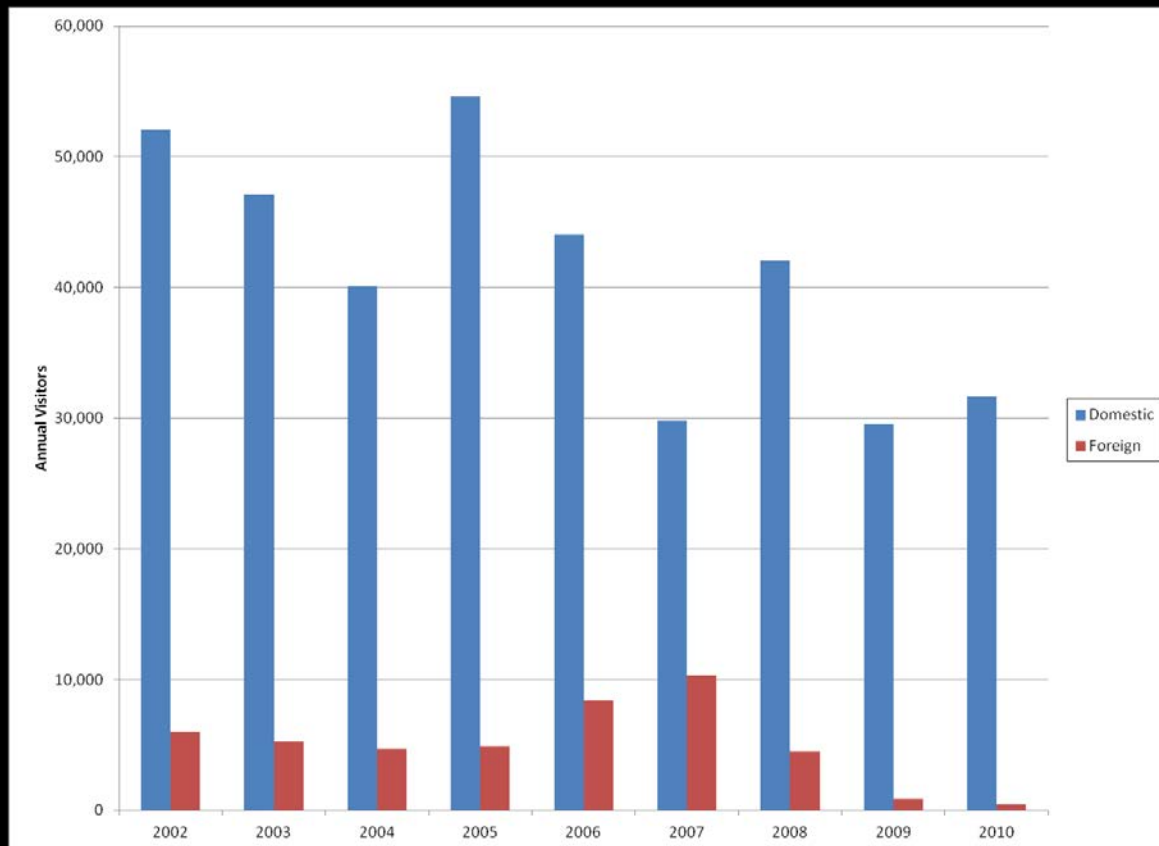


# Natural resources exploration also poses a threat.



- Oil and gas drilling on adjacent lands threaten the integrity of the park.
- In 2011 it was added to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of Most Endangered Historic Places.
- Economic growth from fossil fuel exploration increased the population of the nearest city, Bloomfield, by 26.4% between 2000 and 2010.

Visitor levels at Paquimé have declined 46.1% from the post-inscription peak.

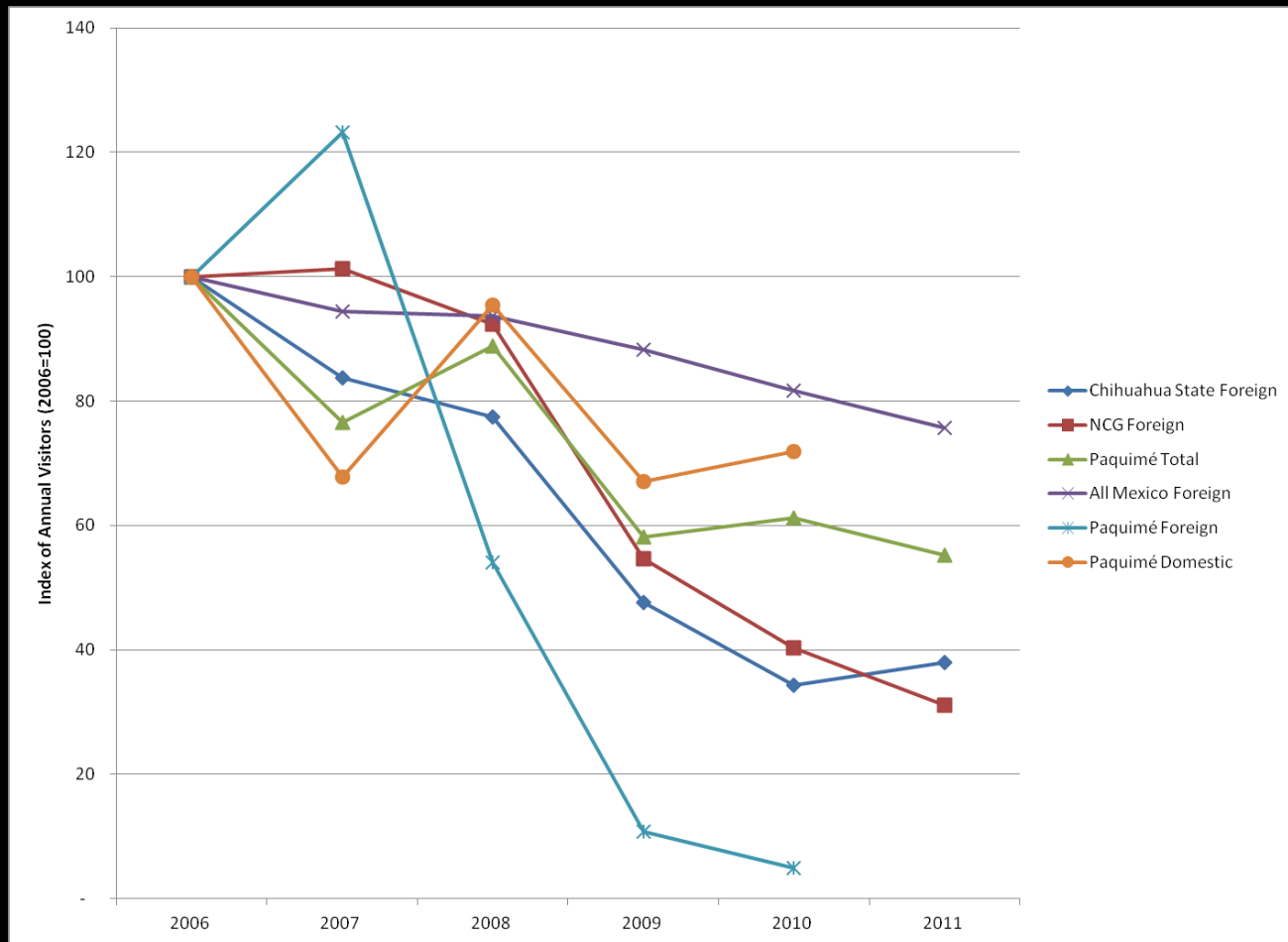


While Chaco resists growth, Paquimé craves it.

From 2007, annual foreign visitors declined 96.0% -- to 415 in 2010.

- 2008 H1N1 influenza scare.
- Continued perception of violence in Mexican states along the U.S. frontier.
- Economic recession and sluggish recovery.

# Tourism in and near Paquimé has suffered more greatly than Mexico as an entity.



*Paquimé has suffered a steeper decline than was experienced in the nearby city of Nuevo Casas Grandes, home to 434 hotel rooms.*

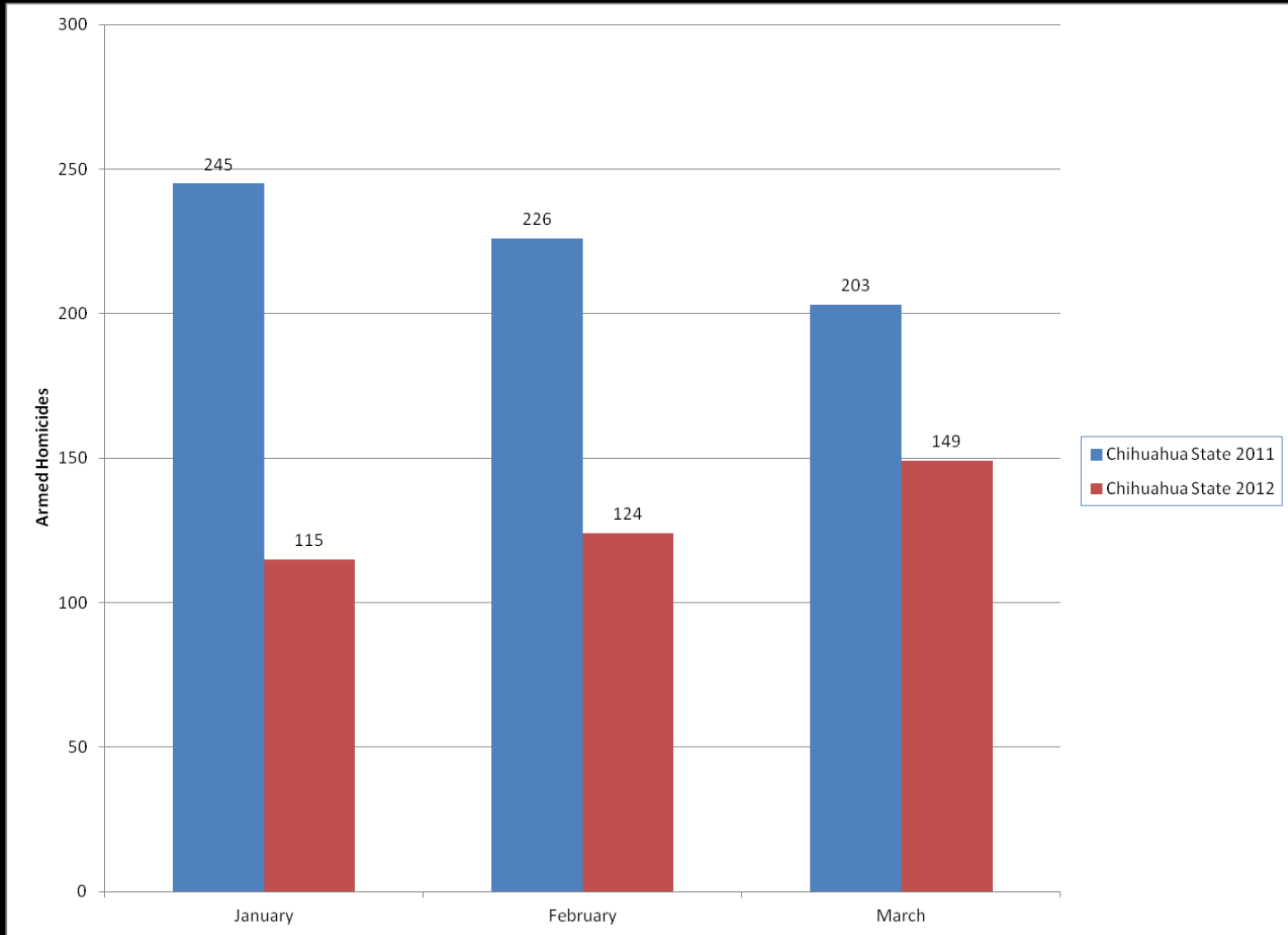


# Given its physical characteristics Paquimé is better-suited for growth than Chaco.

- Compact: Paquimé covers 146 hectares or 0.56 square miles.
- Nature of the visitor experience can accommodate large groups.
  - Visitors follow a strictly defined path, largely defined with steel edges.
  - Unlike the experience at vast Chaco, strolling visitors are always supervised by 1-5 security personnel.
  - Indeed, the Museum of the Northern Cultures has been encouraging busloads of school groups.
- Infrastructure to accommodate large visitor volumes is in place.
  - Maximum capacity of the museum: 150.
    - Current daily average is less than 100.
  - Hotels and restaurants are nearby.



Recent experience suggests security problems may be easing.



Despite centuries of connectivity, the path between these World Heritage sites is not easy to negotiate.



Apart from perceived and real threats to security, other barriers thwart this boundary crossing..

## Mexican Visitors to the U.S.

- Visa requirements.
- Visa cost: US \$160.
- Visa requirements.
  - Online application.
  - Appointment for fingerprints and to submit photographs.
  - Possible interview at US Embassy.
- Border crossing delays.





## Security and Background Information

### Edit Part 1

Do you have a communicable disease of public health significance? (Communicable diseases of public significance include chancroid, gonorrhea, granuloma inguinale, infectious leprosy, lymphogranuloma venereum, infectious stage syphilis, active tuberculosis, and others diseases as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services.)

NO

Do you have a mental or physical disorder that poses or is likely to pose a threat to the safety or welfare of yourself or others?

NO

Are you or have you ever been a drug abuser or addict?

NO

### Edit Part 2

Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any offense or crime, even though subject of a pardon, amnesty, or other similar action?

NO

Have you ever violated, or engaged in a conspiracy to violate, any law relating to controlled substances?

NO

Are you coming to the United States to engage in prostitution or unlawful commercialized vice or have you been engaged in prostitution or procuring prostitutes within the past 10 years?

NO

Have you ever been involved in, or do you seek to engage in, money laundering?

NO

Have you ever committed or conspired to commit a human trafficking offense in the United States or outside the United States?

NO

Are you the spouse, son, or daughter of an individual who has committed or conspired to commit a human trafficking offense in the United States or outside the United States and have you within the last five years, knowingly benefited from the trafficking activities?

NO

Have you knowingly aided, abetted, assisted or colluded with an individual who has committed or conspired to commit a severe human trafficking offense in the United States or outside the United States?

NO

### Edit Part 3

Do you seek to engage in espionage, sabotage, export control violations, or any other illegal activity while in the United States?

NO

Do you seek to engage in terrorist activities while in the United States or have you ever engaged in terrorist activities?

NO

Have you ever or do you intend to provide financial assistance or other support to terrorists or terrorist organizations?

NO

Are you a member or representative of a terrorist organization?

NO

Have you ever ordered, incited, committed, assisted, or otherwise participated in genocide?

NO

Have you ever committed, ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in torture?

NO

Have you committed, ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in extrajudicial killings, political killings, or other acts of violence?

NO

Have you ever engaged in the recruitment or the use of the child soldiers?

NO

Have you, while serving as a government official, been responsible for or directly carried out, at any time, particularly severe violations of religious freedom?

NO

Have you ever been directly involved in the establishment or enforcement of the population controls forcing a woman to undergo an abortion against her free choice or a man or a woman to undergo sterilization against his or her free will?

NO

Have you ever been directly involved in the coercive transplantation of human organs or bodily tissue?

NO

While there are signs security is improving., other barriers to the free flow of visitors remain.

## US visitors to Mexico

- Continued perception of danger.
- No visa required for visits up to 180 days.
- Car requirements.
  - \$48.84 plus up to \$400 in refundable deposit.
- Cost of tourist card.
  - ~\$22.
- State Department Warning.



Despite evidence of improved security, the US Department of State Continues its 8 February 2012

Blanket Warning Against Travel to Chihuahua.

You should defer non-essential travel to the state of Chihuahua. The situation in the state of Chihuahua, specifically Ciudad Juarez, is of special concern. Ciudad Juarez has one of the highest murder rates in Mexico. The Mexican government reports that more than 3,100 people were killed in Ciudad Juarez in 2010 and 1,933 were killed in 2011. Three persons associated with the Consulate General were murdered in March 2010. The state of Chihuahua is normally entered through Columbus, NM, and the El Paso, Fabens and Fort Hancock, TX, ports-of-entry. There have been incidents of narcotics-related violence in the vicinity of the Copper Canyon in Chihuahua.

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_5665.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_5665.html)

Sites may be selected because of Outstanding Universal Value, but the values they evoke and espouse are not universal.

- Presentation: Mexico's INAH vs. USA's NPS.
- The settings are different.
  - One is remote, while the other is within walking distance of a city with 6,000 inhabitants.
- The experience is different.
  - Large, varied, open, independent vs. small, confined, and hence less-independent.
- Access is not universal.





The irony is that an “outstanding universal” experience for residents on both sides of the US-Mexico frontier is effectively blocked.



<http://www.nps.gov/cagr/parknews/sister-parks-signing.htm>

- The ancient routes for trade and migration that defined these places mark a common, universal heritage for people in Mexico and the United States.
- Real barriers to entry prohibit Mexican and US nationals from experiencing this shared heritage.
  - A “sister parks” agreement between Paquimé and Casa Grande National Monument in Arizona, which was signed this year, has many goals, but encouraging visits to both sites is not one of them.

