WHY DOES AMERICA'S NEW NATIONAL PARK TELL AN APACHE STORY?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The United States has created its 64th national park at Chiricahua in south-eastern Arizona. The area is famous for tall rock spires formed by an ancient volcanic eruption. Native Americans call it the Land of Standing-Up Rocks. The park lies within the historic territory of the Chiricahua Apache, who lived there for centuries and resisted European settlers and the expanding United States. In 1886, Apache leaders including Geronimo and Cochise surrendered to US forces, and many Chiricahua Apache people were forcibly removed to the San Carlos Apache reservation. The area later became a national monument in 1924. The new law protects access for Apache traditional ceremonies and allows parts of the park to close temporarily for cultural reasons. The site also has links to Black soldiers known as Buffalo soldiers, who were stationed there after the American Civil War.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

A national park may look like a place created only to protect beautiful scenery, but it can also contain evidence of conflict, forced removal and cultural survival. Chiricahua shows that public land can have several different meanings at once, especially for Indigenous peoples whose history began long before the modern United States.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"How can one landscape tell the stories of different peoples?"

Source: The Guardian

https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/oct/22/chiricahua-monument-arizona-new-national-park