

Under a Participating Agreement with the USDA Forest Service/San Juan National Forest

## *Chimney Rock Press Release*

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**For Immediate Release – September 17, 2025**

### Major Lunar Standstill

**Pagosa Springs, CO** – Chimney Rock National Monument will once again take center stage this October as the Chimney Rock Interpretive Association hosts one last unforgettable evening celebrating a celestial event rarely seen in a lifetime: the **Major Lunar Standstill**. Taking place on the night of **Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup>**, offering visitors a rare chance to witness one of the most visually striking astronomical alignments on Earth — the Moon rising dramatically between Chimney Rock's impressive rock pinnacles.

While most people are familiar with the Moon's cycle and how its shape changes from crescent to full, and its rising position fluctuates along the horizon, far fewer know about the longer, 18.6-year lunar cycle known as the Major Lunar Standstill. During this time, the Moon's orbit tilts to its extreme, causing it to rise and set at its most northerly and southerly points. At Chimney Rock, this rare alignment causes the Moon to rise between the prominent formations of Chimney Rock and Companion Rock — a phenomenon believed to have been observed and honored by the Ancient Puebloan people over a thousand years ago.

To mark the final public event of this rare alignment's visibility, Chimney Rock Interpretive Association will host one last night program in the Monument's outdoor Amphitheater, located near the Visitor Center. This event will feature cultural and astronomical presentations by leading experts, Native American music, telescope viewing, and a live-streamed broadcast of the Moonrise from a restricted vantage point on the high mesa. Though visitors won't be allowed on the upper site due to safety concerns, they will experience the moment in real-time, surrounded by the natural beauty and stillness of the ancient site.

On Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, check-in will be at the Visitor Center kiosk from 8:30 pm to 9:15 pm. The Amphitheater program will begin at 9:30 pm for presentations by guest speakers. The live stream of the moonrise will take place at 10:20 pm. The event will conclude shortly after the moonrise.

Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$12 for children ages 5 to 12. Children under 5 attend for free. Due to limited seating, reservations are strongly recommended and can be made exclusively through [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) or by calling 877-444-6777. A non-refundable \$1 reservation fee applies. Reservations will be cut off 12 hours prior to the start of the program. Walk-ins will be accommodated on a space-available basis, but only those with reservations are guaranteed admission. Dogs are not permitted at this event, with the exception of certified service animals.

Guests are encouraged to dress warmly for the cool night-time temperatures and to bring blankets or cushions for added comfort on the stone seating. Smoking, vaping, alcohol, and drugs are strictly prohibited. These events may be modified or canceled due to weather or conditions outside of our control. If the event is modified, but **not** canceled, no refunds will be issued. If the entire event is canceled, refunds can only be issued by contacting [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) which issued the reservation. No refunds will be issued for no-shows.

This is the last opportunity to experience the Major Lunar Standstill at Chimney Rock National Monument before the cycle ends in late 2025. The next opportunity won't occur again until 2043. Visitors are invited to come be part of this awe-inspiring moment, connecting sky, stone, and spirit in a sacred place that has drawn human wonder for more than a millennium.

Chimney Rock Interpretive Association (CRIA) and the San Juan National Forest of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, are working in partnership to preserve and develop educational opportunities about the significant archaeological, cultural, geological and biological resources at Chimney Rock National Monument. CRIA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer association and receives no funding from the US Government. For more information see the CRIA website at [www.chimneyrockco.org](http://www.chimneyrockco.org) or call (970) 731-7133.

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