

# Welcome to Fish Creek and Owl Creek Canyons

These drainages both cut diagonally across the eastern edge of Cedar Mesa, coming together several miles before they enter Comb Wash. Both are deep canyons with abundant geological features. Maps needed for this area are either the Trails Illustrated Grand Gulch Plateau map, or the following USGS 7.5 quads: South Long Point, Bluff NW, and Snow Flat Spring Cave.



Nevill's Arch is a prominent feature in Owl Creek. The Arch sits high on a "fin" in the Cedar Mesa sandstone jutting out into the canyon.












Many of the pools in these canyons have extensive hanging gardens, offering a wide variety of vegetation. The rare Kachina Daisy can be found in one of these springs. The vegetation varies from sage flats in the lower ends of the canyons to cottonwood trees and pine stands on the wider benches in the upper forks.

Tracks of bobcats, mountain lion, ringtail and an occasional bear may be seen in the canyons. Small fish may be found in the pools, including killi fish, chubs, suckers, and shiners or dace. Toads and frogs can be seen and heard, and there is also evidence of beaver activity in the lower reaches of Fish Creek.



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## What You Can Do to Protect the Bears Ears National Monument:

-  **Leave All Artifacts Where You Find Them**  
Don't take or add to "Display Rocks"
-  **Don't Touch Rock Writing or Add Your Own**
-  **Steer Clear of Walls**  
Structures can be easily damaged
-  **GPS Reveals Too Much**  
Remove location data for online photos
-  **Don't Bust the Crust**  
Stay on existing trails
-  **Pay Your Fees**  
Your small fee supports protecting this area
-  **Know Where Pets are Allowed**  
Pets are never allowed in archeological sites
-  **Enjoy Archaeology without Ropes**  
Using climbing gear to access sites is illegal
-  **Camp and Eat Away from Archaeology**
-  **No Fires in the Canyons of Cedar Mesa**  
Use existing fire rings when on the rims
-  **Go to the Bathroom Away from Sites**  
Pack out all toilet paper

*It is your responsibility to know the rules and regulations, as they may be different inside and outside the Bears Ears National Monument. For maps, trip planning information, and rules, regulations, and recreation permits, contact the BLM at (435) 587-1510.*

### To Report an Emergency Call 911

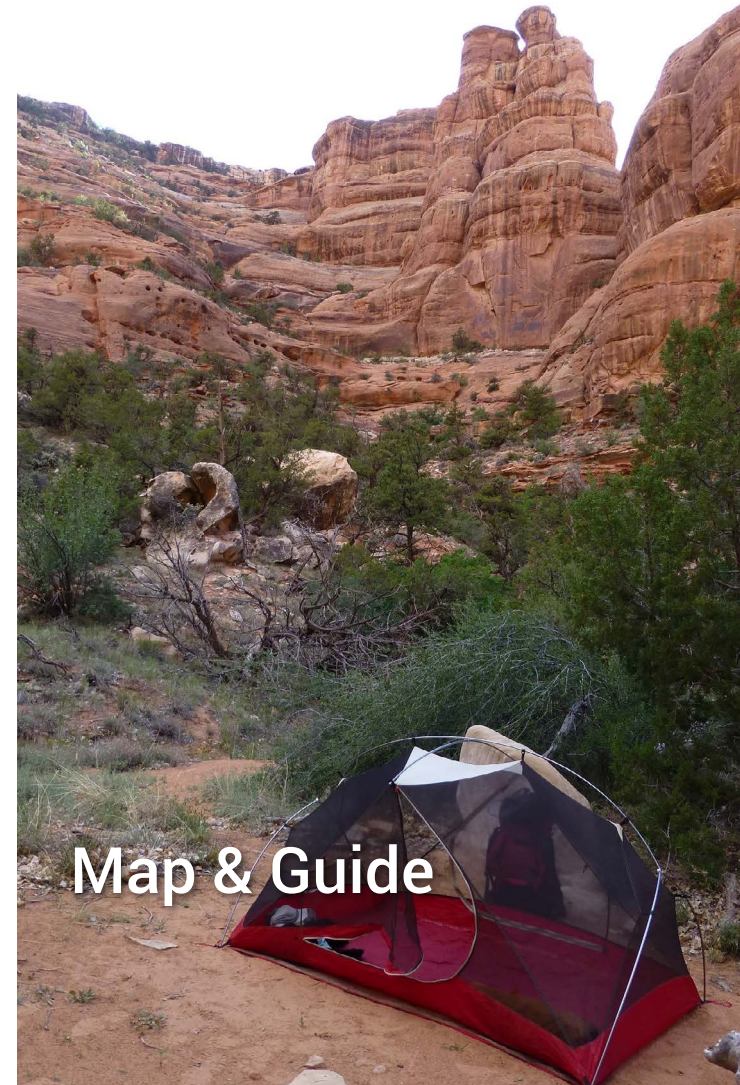
Cell phone service is unreliable in this area - you may need to walk or drive out to a high point.



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# Fish and Owl Creek Canyons

Bears Ears National Monument



Map & Guide

# Getting There

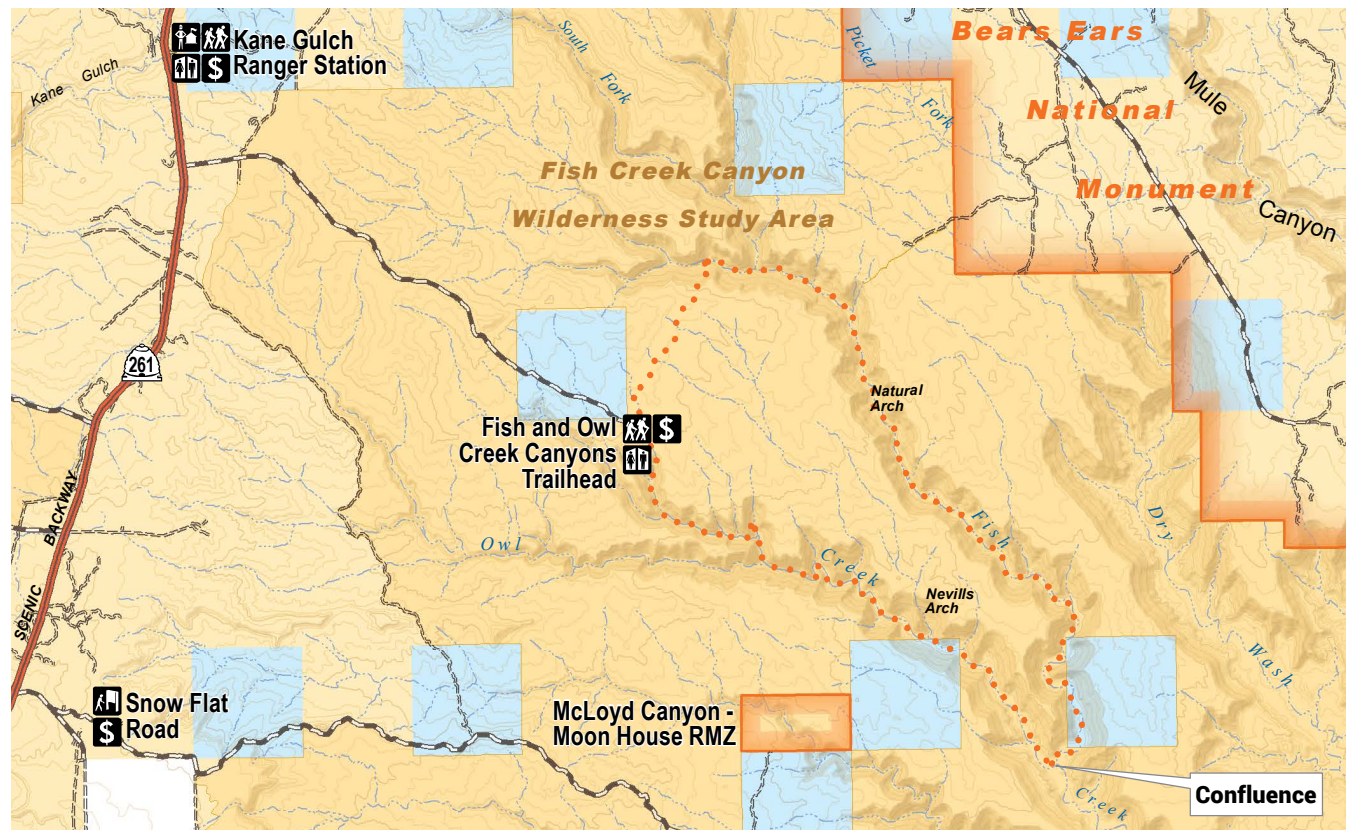
The road access to the trailhead is one mile south of Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261. Turn east and drive approximately five miles on a dirt road to a drill hole which is the parking area. This road is passable to passenger vehicles during good weather. If it rains or snows, this road can become impassable even to 4WD vehicles. There is a kiosk and restrooms at the trailhead.

# Hiking in Fish and Owl Creeks

The main loop is approximately 17 miles long. Three days is recommended to do this hike. Permits are required for day use and overnight hiking. Overnight permits must be obtained at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station March 1st - June 15th and September 1st to October 31st. At other times of year, permits may be obtained at trailhead fee stations.

The recommended route is to enter Owl and exit Fish Canyon. The first three miles of Owl are steep and mostly slickrock, with several large pour-offs to be circumvented. One of the detours involves going into a small side canyon on the north side of the main canyon and scrambling down some rocks. Nevill's Arch is approximately five miles in Owl Creek.

The junction of Fish and Owl is quite wide. Fish is narrower than Owl but is gentle, without impasse in the first five miles. The upper forks of Fish Creek are all blocked by boulders and rock fall. Once you pass this fork of Fish, begin watching to the south. The trail climbs out of the canyon on the steep talus slope approximately 600 feet in a 10 to 12 foot crack which may require passing packs or a short rope to reach the top. The trail then goes through the pinyon and juniper forest and across several small drainages for 1.5 miles back to the trailhead.



**Legend:**

|                   |                              |  |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Ranger Station    | State Routes                 | BLM Wilderness Study Area (WSA)                        |
| Trailhead         | Class B Roads                | Bureau of Land Management (BLM)                        |
| Toilet            | Class D Roads                | Private  |
| Pay Station       | Suggested Hiking Route       | State Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) |
| Interpretive Sign | Bears Ears National Monument |  |

North

# Water Conditions

Owl Creek is usually dry from Nevill's Arch to the confluence with Fish Creek. Fish Creek generally has intermittent water from two miles up canyon from the confluence to the upper junctions. Owl has three large springs which are generally dependable year round, especially in the spring, but do not count on them for water in the summer months. Top off water bottles when water is available.



Even springs can dry up, so always check conditions before heading out!

Conditions change daily! Filter all water before drinking.

# Visit with Respect

As you explore Fish and Owl Creeks, you will likely encounter many culturally important places. In addition to being protected by law, these places hold value for modern Native Americans who may visit them for cultural, ceremonial, or religious reasons. Modern tribes place values on plants, water, and geological features as well as archeological sites. Please visit these places with proper care and respect.

It is our shared responsibility to respect and protect cultural resources on our public lands.