

Welcome to the Needles District . . .

Desert Seekers:

Welcome to the Needles District of Canyonlands National Park. We hope you enjoy the park and all it has to offer. Please keep in mind the fact that many others wish to enjoy the park, too, and that those who follow you will be seeking the same kinds of experiences that attracted you here. We need your help in preserving the features that make this area a national treasure: scenery, peace and quiet, prehistoric structures and artwork, relatively undisturbed countryside, and many intangible things.

Visiting a National Park should be like a game, a competitive sport in which the players try to surpass each other in leaving no evidence that they were ever here! The role of the National Park Rangers is to offer coaching advice and, occasionally, to serve as referees. We very much prefer the job of coach, and have the following suggestions as to how you can prevent other visitors from knowing you were here.

Keep your vehicles on the roads and your feet on the trails. It's possible to hike off the trails without leaving evidence, but difficult: stay on slick rock and in dry washes; avoid areas of cryptogamic crust or walk in drainage channels through such areas. If you drive a vehicle off-road (which is illegal) or walk on cryptogamic soil (which is irresponsible) you will leave evidence of your presence that may last a decade. All vehicles and drivers, incidentally, must be licensed for regular highway travel.

Hide trash and garbage in garbage cans, especially pop-tops, cigarette butts, food scraps, and other little things that "don't amount to much." Carry out everything you bring into the backcountry.

Killing, maiming, or molesting wildlife of any kind is evidence of your being here; don't do it. The wildlife *lives* here, you're a visitor. Guns and any other weapons are prohibited.

Camping activities can produce a lot of evidence of your being here, but all can be avoided. Firewood cannot be collected in the park, so backpackers should use stoves. Vehicle campers who wish to have campfires must bring fuel with them and may only build fires in fireplaces. Backpackers should camp well out of sight of roads and trails and vehicle campers must use only designated campsites. At developed sites, leave them cleaner than you found them; at backcountry sites, pack out everything you brought in. Remember, it's the little things that count: pop-tops, cigarette butts, food scraps, tissues, etc. If you are scrupulously careful, no one will know you were here.

Pets are allowed in the park, but may not be taken on hiking trails and must be leashed at all times. Even with these controls, pets leave evidence that should be transferred to garbage cans.

There isn't much water around here, so it's a precious resource. Washing your clothes, yourself, a friend, or utensils in streams or potholes releases soaps, oils, food scraps, and other contaminants that disrupt the lives of organisms living there. That is a very strong indication that you were here. Don't do it. Carry water at least 100 feet from any water source (including spigots in campgrounds) before washing, and dispose of waste water carefully.

There are toilets at many locations: they are a good place to hide some of the evidence that you were here. Do not, however, use them to dispose of trash and garbage. Where toilets are not available, bury human waste six inches deep in soil (not sand) at least 100 feet from trails, water sources, etc. Either burn toilet paper (carefully!) in the hole or pack it out.

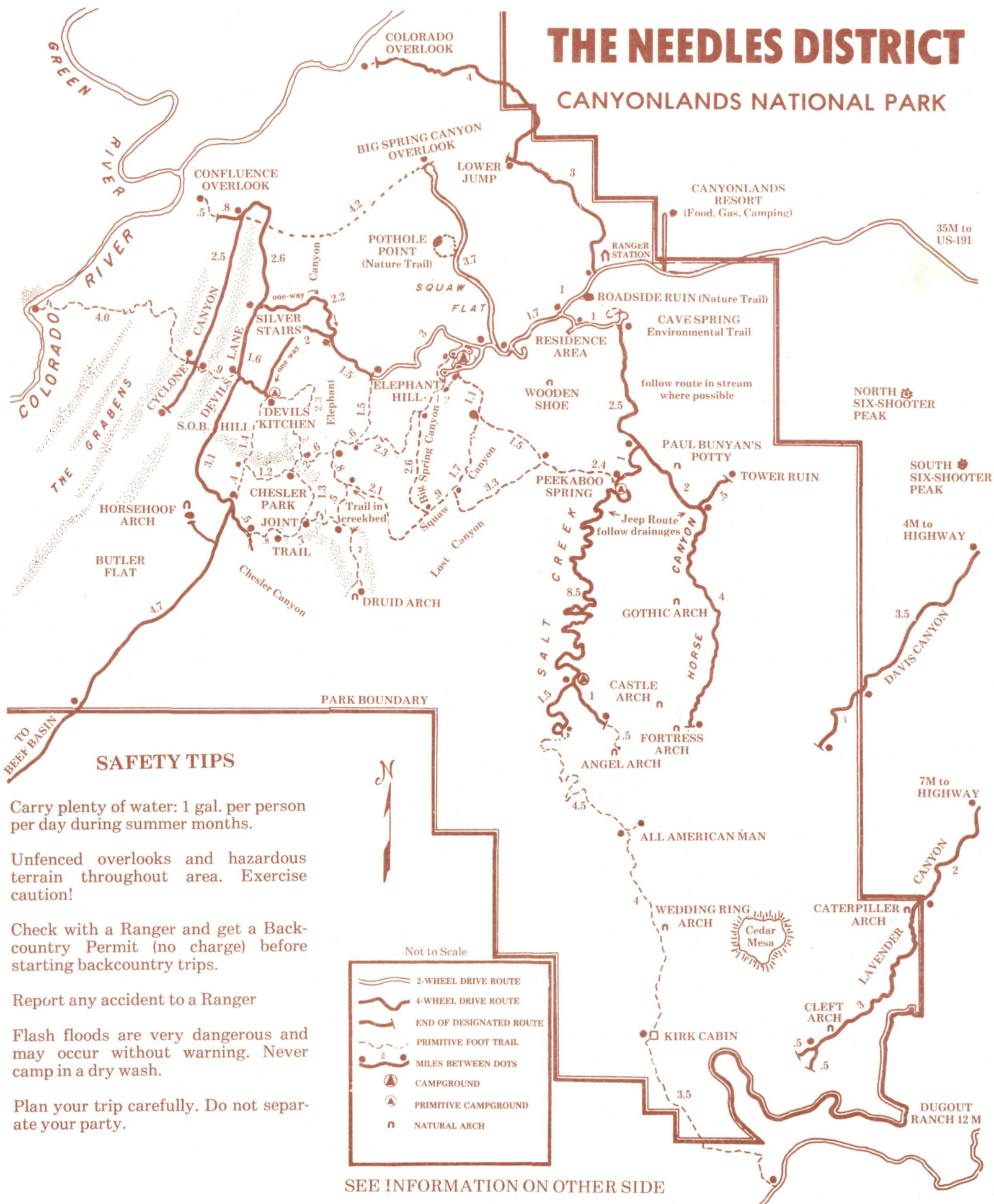
The absolutely worst evidence of your presence here is your name, initials, other words, designs or scratches on rocks, trees, and other park features. Less obvious, but also very damaging, are the oils, salts, and acids deposited on ancient rock artwork by people touching them. Resist the urge; the pigments and even the rock surfaces are gradually being destroyed by what we call "innocent vandalism." Indian ruins, historic structures, cultural artifacts (arrowheads, potsherds, etc.) and other evidence of the area's prehistory and history should be left undisturbed. Look at them, enjoy them, ponder their significance, but don't remove them.

If you play the no evidence game and are good at it, no one will be able to tell you were here. There are two ways you can prove you were here without detracting from your success as a no impact visitor. If you're a backcountry user (by vehicle or foot), we want to issue a free Backcountry Use Permit to you. You can get one at the contact station, where you can also write in the visitor register book to record your name and any comments about the park, this leaflet, or any other facet of your visit.

Above all else, enjoy your visit here and help us keep it pleasant for the thousands that follow.

THE NEEDLES DISTRICT

CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK



SEE INFORMATION ON OTHER SIDE