



# Canyonlands

2013, No. 1

## Your Steps Matter

A lush forest stretches across the landscape of southeast Utah, but it isn't your typical forest. Instead of trees, soils draped in mosses, lichens and fungi rise up in rugged spires across the desert. Hidden from view, cyanobacteria move through the soil and bind loose particles together in a fibrous web, forming a living, "biological" crust across the desert.

Like trees, biological soil crust prevents erosion, anchoring soil in place and creating a stable environment where seeds can germinate.

Like trees, biological soil crust traps nutrients and water, making these essential elements more available to surrounding plants.

Like a forest, biological soil crust is a complex community of organisms that plays a significant role in ecosystems where it's found.

Like a forest, biological soil crust may appear unremarkable when it's young.

However, this forest is tiny. So tiny that it can be clear-cut (or trampled) by something as small as the human foot.

In fact, many human activities negatively affect the presence and health of soil crusts. Compressional stresses placed on them by footprints or machinery are extremely harmful, especially when the crusts are dry and brittle. Tracks in continuous strips, such as those produced by vehicles or bicycles, create areas that are vulnerable to wind and water erosion. Rainfall washes away loose material, often creating channels along these tracks, especially on slopes.

Impacted areas may never fully recover. Under the best circumstances, a thin crust may return in five to seven years. Damage done to the fibrous web, and the accompanying loss of soil nutrients, is repaired slowly during up to 50 years of cyanobacterial growth. Lichens and mosses may take even longer to recover.

Your steps really do matter.

Help us protect desert soils. Walk on trails, on rock or in sandy washes (where water flows when it rains), and keep all vehicles and bikes on designated roads.

Learn more about desert soils on our website at <http://go.nps.gov/soilcrust>.



Humble beginnings: young soil crusts may have very little relief, so keep your feet on trails, slickrock or washes.



Old growth: draped in lichens, mature crusts like these stabilize soils and provide safe haven for seeds, like this Utah juniper.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Canyonlands National Park  
2282 SW Resource Blvd.  
Moab, UT 84532



### Stay Connected

Join Canyonlands on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr or YouTube and share your park experiences with us and our growing online community:

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National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

### Canyonlands Backcountry Trip Planner

**Published By**  
Canyonlands Natural History Association (CNHA), a nonprofit organization that assists the National Park Service in its educational, interpretive and scientific programs. For more information, see the back page.

**Mailing Address**  
Canyonlands National Park  
2282 SW Resource Blvd.  
Moab, UT 84532

**Backcountry Reservations**  
phone (435) 259-4351  
email canyres@nps.gov

**General Park Information**  
phone (435) 719-2313  
email canyinfo@nps.gov

**Websites**  
nps.gov/cany  
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*The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.*



### Guided Trips

Travel to backcountry areas requires planning, experience and equipment that is often expensive. For park visitors without the resources or inclination to plan their own excursions, guided trips offer the perfect way to experience the wonders of Canyonlands.

Guided trips are offered by local outfitters for hiking, biking, four-wheel driving and river running. Some companies combine a variety of these activities, and trips may vary in length from one to many days. In addition to planning your trip down to the last detail, outfitters also offer expert guides who will enrich your journey with their knowledge of the area's cultural and natural history.

For a list of outfitters approved by the National Park Service, visit our website at [www.nps.gov/cany](http://www.nps.gov/cany).

# Choose Your Adventure



## Hiking & Backpacking

What better way to explore this wilderness of countless canyons than on foot? Canyonlands offers hundreds of miles of hiking trails with designated campsites, as well as vast primitive areas where hikers are free to imagine their own trails and camps (without damaging any soil crusts along the way...see page one). Be sure to bring a topographic map and your sense of adventure.

### THINGS TO KNOW

- Permits are required for overnight trips.
- Spring & fall are best times for backpacking.
- Expect gnats May through July.

### WHERE TO GO

Island in the Sky for short day hikes. Needles for longer hikes or backpacking. Maze for extended backpacking trips.



## Mountain Biking

With hundreds of miles of four-wheel-drive roads, Canyonlands offers ideal terrain for multi-night mountain bike trips. Most groups travel with vehicle support to haul water and gear since there are few reliable water sources along these roads. For the truly adventurous, self-supported trips with panniers and trailers are also possible. Bikes must remain on designated roads: there are no single-track trails in the park.

### THINGS TO KNOW

- Permits are required for overnight trips.
- Groups must camp in designated sites.
- Reserve White Rim permits in advance.

### WHERE TO GO

The 100-mile "White Rim Road" is the park's most famous ride. The Maze offers similar terrain, but the roads are more technical.



## Boating

The Colorado and Green rivers played a significant role in shaping the landscape of Canyonlands, and both offer an interesting way to visit the park. Above their confluence, the rivers offer miles and miles of flat water perfect for canoes, sea kayaks and other shallow-water boats. Below the confluence, the combined flow of both rivers spills down Cataract Canyon with remarkable speed and power, creating a fourteen-mile stretch of Class III to V white water.

### THINGS TO KNOW

- Permits are required for all river trips the park (see page 8).
- Groups should arrange their jet boat shuttle (for upstream transport) before contacting the park.
- High water is late May through June.
- There are no designated camps on the rivers.



## Four-wheel Driving

There are hundreds of miles of 4WD roads in Canyonlands, providing access to various campsites, trailheads and viewpoints in the park. High-clearance, 4WD vehicles are required for most of these roads: all-wheel-drive vehicles usually have difficulty negotiating the ledges, deep sand and steep switchbacks found throughout the park. Vehicles must remain on roads.

### THINGS TO KNOW

- Permits are required for overnight trips.
- Expect towing fees over \$1,000 for any vehicles disabled in the backcountry.
- ATVs, UTVs, OHVs are not permitted. Dirt bikes must be interstate legal.

### WHERE TO GO

The White Rim Road offers a good introduction to four-wheel driving in canyon country. Want to get technical? Head to Elephant Hill in the Needles or the Land of Standing Rocks in the Maze.



## Rock Climbing

Do your trips to the backcountry typically involve a rope and a harness? The cliffs and towers of wingate sandstone that form the canyonlands basin attract the most rock climbers. Little climbing is done in the rest of the park due to the poor rock quality and a lack of established routes.

### THINGS TO KNOW

- Permits are required for overnight trips.
- Special regulations apply to these activities (see sidebar on next page).
- Slacklining or highlining are not permitted.

### WHERE TO GO

Most technical climbing occurs on the cliffs and towers at the Island in the Sky.

# Island in the Sky



The view from Green River Overlook.

### VISITOR SERVICES

- Visitor center is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily (except some winter holidays), with extended hours spring through fall. Backcountry permits may be picked up during business hours.
- Water bottles can be filled at the visitor center (refillable bottles may be purchased). Water is not available elsewhere.
- Willow Flat Campground is open year-round on a first-come, first-served basis. There are 12 sites with tables, fire grills and vault toilets. The access road is paved. Firewood and water are not available. Maximum group size is ten people. Sites are \$10/night. Maximum RV length is 28 feet at most sites.

### HIKING TRAILS

Island backcountry trails generally begin on the mesa top and descend via switchbacks to the White Rim bench. A few trails continue down to one of the rivers. Most are considered strenuous, with an elevation change of 1,000-2,000 feet, and require negotiating steep slopes of loose rock as well as sections of deep sand. The most popular long trails are described below.

#### Murphy Loop

Length: 11 mi/17.7 km round-trip  
Start: Murphy Point Trailhead

A few miles of hiking on the mesa top leads to a steep descent down a cliff face to a bench where the trail divides. One fork continues along Murphy Hogback, a slim mesa with great views of the White Rim Formation and the surrounding canyons. At Murphy camp, hikers follow the White Rim Road south for about a mile, then follow a rock-strewn wash back up onto the hogback. At-large backpacking only. No water.

#### Lathrop Canyon

Length: 22 mi/35 km round-trip to Colorado River  
Start: Lathrop Trailhead

After crossing grasslands on the mesa top, this trail winds along the canyon rim then descends steep switchbacks to a boulder-strewn wash that leads to the White Rim Road. Hikers can follow the spur road down into Lathrop Canyon. At-large permits are available for camping below the White Rim Road.

#### Syncline Loop

Length: 8 mi/13 km round-trip  
Start: Upheaval Dome Trailhead

This strenuous trail follows the washes on either side of Upheaval Dome, forming a loop that provides access inside the crater and to the Green River. Total elevation change is roughly 2,900 feet. Trail climbs



Washer Woman Arch: a popular, technical climb.



Shafer Trail: gateway to adventure at the Island.



Mountain biking on the White Rim Road.

some steep, exposed grades. North side of the loop passes through a riparian area where water and shade may be available. There is one designated campsite along the trail.

#### Taylor Canyon

Length: 21 mi/35 km round-trip to Green River  
Start: Alcove Spring Trailhead

Trail descends via steep switchbacks to a rocky wash that leads into this broad, steep-walled canyon. Hikers can follow the four-wheel-drive road to the Green River. Four at-large camping permits are available. Groups may encounter significant traffic on the roads as well as on the river. Returning via Upheaval Canyon/Syncline Loop reduces the round-trip mileage by 3 miles.

### BACKPACKING

The Island is a challenging place to backpack. The landscape below the mesa top is a mixture of talus slopes and vast basins without any reliable water sources. There are few routes leading below the White Rim Road to the rivers, and river water is so silty that it's difficult to purify. Backpackers must camp at-large unless traveling along the Syncline Trail where there is a designated site. A permit is required for all overnight trips (page 4).

### WHITE RIM ROAD

The 100-mile White Rim Road loops around and below the Island mesa top and provides expansive views of the surrounding area. Trips usually take two to three days by four-wheel-drive vehicle or three to four days by mountain bike. Under favorable weather conditions, the White Rim Road is considered moderately difficult for high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles. The steep, exposed sections of the Shafer Trail, Lathrop Canyon Road, Murphy Hogback, Hardscrabble Hill, and the Mineral Bottom switchbacks make the White Rim loop a challenging mountain bike ride, and require extreme caution for both vehicles and bikes during periods of inclement weather. All vehicles and bikes must remain on roads. ATVs are not permitted.

A permit is required for all overnight trips (page 4). Bicyclists and four-wheel drivers must stay in designated campsites. Twenty individual campsites are arranged in ten camping areas. The White Rim Road is extremely popular and campsites fill early. Advance reservations are highly recommended (see page 4). No potable water is available along the White Rim Road. For mountain bike trips, a four-wheel-drive support vehicle to carry water and equipment is highly recommended. Toilets are provided at each campsite.

## Climbing Regulations

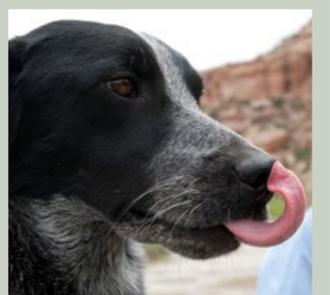
Permits are not required for technical rock climbing or canyoneering unless the trip requires an overnight stay in the backcountry. Climbers are encouraged to check in at district visitor centers before beginning a climb.

Technical rock climbing is prohibited in the Salt Creek Archeological District in the Needles, in Horseshoe Canyon, into any archeological site, or on any arch or natural bridge in Canyonlands National Park or the Orange Cliffs Unit of Glen Canyon NRA named on a USGS map, with the exception of Washer Woman Arch at the Island.

The intentional removal of lichen or plants from rock is prohibited. The physical altering of rock faces by chiseling, glue reinforcement of existing holds, and gluing of new holds is prohibited. The use of motorized power drills is prohibited. Slacklining is prohibited. Chalk must match the color of the rock surface.

All climbing shall be free or clean aid climbing with the following exceptions:

- No new hardware may be left in a fixed location; however, if a hardware item is unsafe, it may be replaced.
- Protection may not be placed with the use of a hammer except to replace existing belay/rappel anchors and bolts on existing routes, or for emergency self-rescue.
- If an existing software item (sling, etc.) is unsafe, it may be replaced. Software that is left in place must match the rock surface in color.



## Pets

Activities with pets are very limited at Canyonlands. Pets are not allowed on hiking trails or anywhere in the backcountry. Pets may not accompany groups traveling by four-wheel-drive vehicle, mountain bike or boat.

Pets may accompany you in the developed campgrounds, and may be walked in the park along paved roads. Pets may also accompany groups on the Potash/Shafter Canyon road between Moab and the Island in the Sky. Pets must be leashed at all times when outside a vehicle.



Exploring the canyons of the Maze (top) and the Colorado River.

## Reserving a Permit

Reservations for the 2014 season and beyond will be available no more than four months, and no less than two days, prior to the permit start date. Reservation forms (and additional information) are available on our website at [www.nps.gov/cany](http://www.nps.gov/cany).

To process a request, we need the following information:

**Trip Leader**  
Name, address, email and phone numbers for the individual making the reservation.

**Group Size**  
The number of people and, if appropriate, vehicles in your group.

**Type of Trip**  
Select an activity. Multiple activities may be combined on one permit providing group size limits are not exceeded and no more than one activity is chosen on a given day. For example, if part of a river trip group wants to backpack for a night, they must be on a separate permit; if the entire group backpacks, it can occur on the same permit as long as group size limits for the destination are not exceeded. Day use permits are not required for visitors camping at, or backpacking from, the Peekaboo vehicle sites. Cataract Canyon trips include the flat water section.

**Itinerary**  
List the dates and, if appropriate, campsites or locations desired. There are no designated camps along the rivers.

**Additional Information**  
River trips should indicate launch and take out locations. If a river trip launches outside Canyonlands, please indicate what day you will be entering the park. Flat water trips should indicate upstream travel arrangements.

**Payment**  
Once your reservation request is approved, you will receive an email with payment instructions.

# Permits

Much of Canyonlands is managed for its primitive character, so the park is a popular destination for backcountry travel. Hundreds of miles of rugged trails and roads wind through the park. Activities requiring a permit include backpacking, four-wheel-drive and mountain bike camping, river trips, and four-wheel-drive day use in Horse and Lavender canyons in the Needles District. Fees are charged and group size limits apply (see chart below).

### LENGTH OF STAY

Permits (except day use) can be issued for up to fourteen consecutive nights. Backpackers may stay up to seven consecutive nights in any one site or zone (ten nights in the Maze zones). Visitors using the designated vehicle camps may stay a maximum of three consecutive nights at a site before having to relocate to another area.

### OBTAINING A PERMIT

Permits are issued by email from the Reservation Office in Moab (with adequate lead time), and in person seven days a week at district visitor centers. Walk-in river permits are usually issued from the Reservation Office in Moab, which is open Monday through Friday. Permits are issued up to one hour before the close of business each day.

Permits for the 2014 season and beyond will be available no more than four months, and no less than two days, prior to the permit start date. For example, permits for trips beginning on January 1, 2014 will be available starting September 1, 2013. And, permits for trips beginning on January 2, 2014 will be available starting September 2, 2013. Campsites or permits not reserved in advance are available on a first-come, first-served basis at district visitor centers.

Groups interested in White Rim trips, Needles backpacking trips during spring and fall, and frontcountry group sites throughout the year should apply as early as possible.

### SITES & ZONES

In order to protect park resources and prevent crowding, the backcountry of Canyonlands is divided into sites and zones, and access to each is limited. Designated sites exist along all four-wheel-drive roads for use by four-wheel-drive/mountain bike groups. There are also designated backpacking campsites along some heavily traveled hiking trails, mostly in the Needles District. In remote areas where travel is limited to foot or boat, visitors stay in at-large zones and may choose their own *minimum-impact* campsites.

## Weather and Climate Statistics

Temperatures	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Extreme High	67	75	85	91	101	109	111	108	108	94	80	68
Extreme Low	-28	-21	7	16	23	32	38	36	28	-6	-8	-15
Ave. High	39	46	55	64	73	87	92	90	82	68	51	38
Ave. Low	19	23	30	34	46	58	62	60	51	40	29	22
Days above 90°	0	0	0	0	6	20	30	26	12	0	0	0
Days below 32°	30	22	17	6	0	0	0	0	5	20	29	
(Temperatures measured in degrees Fahrenheit)												
Precipitation	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Rain (inches)	.63	.29	1.07	.76	.71	.50	1.15	.92	.69	1.0	.86	.60
Snow (inches)	5.5	1.2	2.8	3.4	0.2	-	-	-	-	0.5	3.3	2.4
Poss. Sun (%)	56	64	60	68	74	83	77	79	80	75	63	60
# Thunderstorms	0	0	1	1	4	4	9	11	5	2	0	0

### WATER

Water is a limiting factor for most backcountry trips in Canyonlands. There are springs scattered throughout the park, mostly in canyon bottoms. There are also large areas such as the Grabens in the Needles, and the entire White Rim bench at the Island, where there are no reliable water sources. Obtaining drinking water from either the Green or Colorado rivers is difficult as the water is very silty and hard to purify. Hikers are encouraged to pack in water whenever possible. Some springs shown on maps may dry up during periods of drought. Water source locations and current conditions are available at district visitor centers. Plan on needing at least a gallon per person per day.

### QUESTIONS?

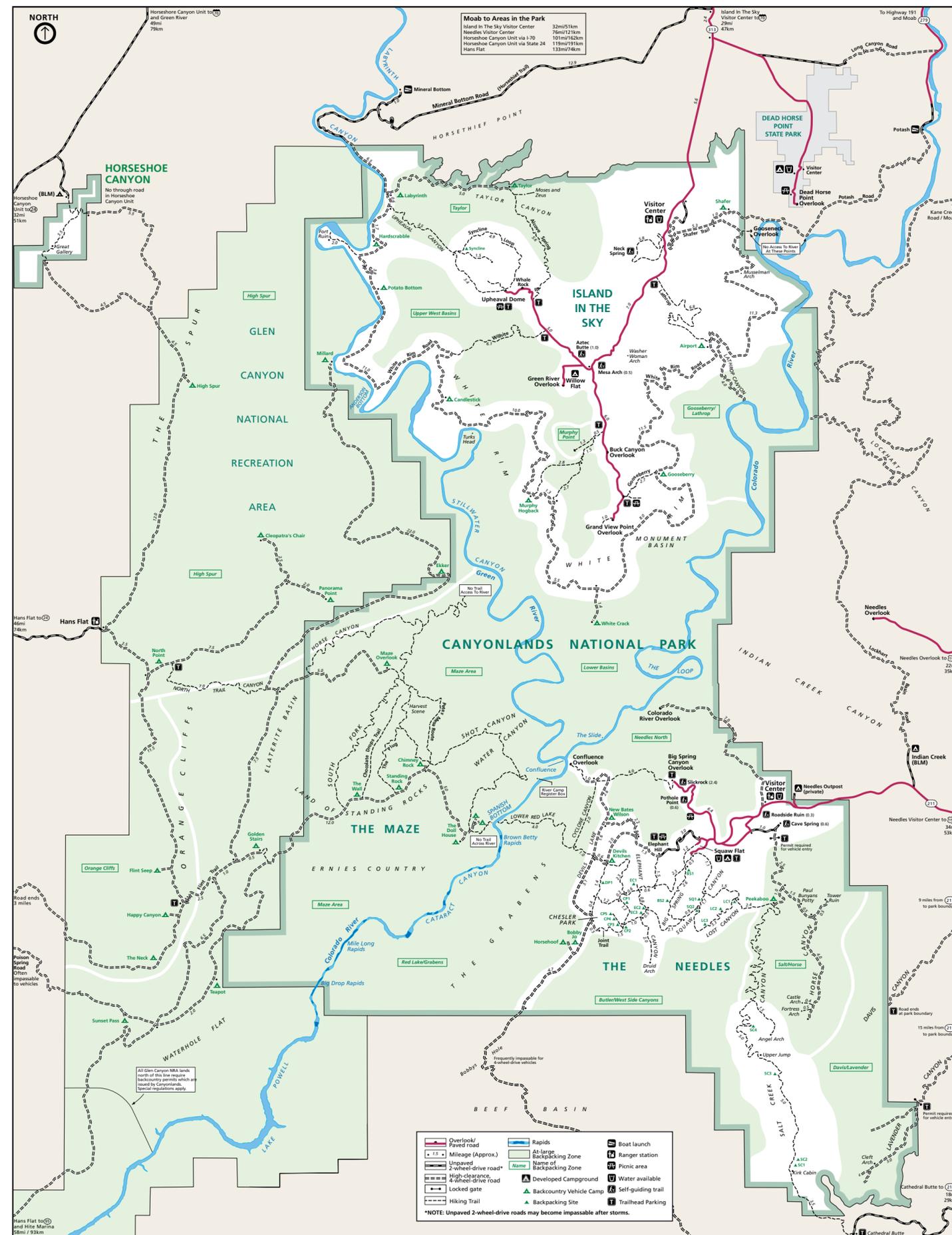
Reservation Office staff can be reached by email at [canyres@nps.gov](mailto:canyres@nps.gov). Staff are also available to answer questions and assist with trip planning by phone Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (Mountain Time), at (435) 259-4351. When workload permits, phones may be answered until 4:00 p.m.

[facebook.com/CanyonlandsNPS](https://www.facebook.com/CanyonlandsNPS)

If you're looking for trip planning information, consider posting your question on our Facebook page as someone else might be wondering the same thing.

## Fees & Group Sizes

Activity (Fee)	Group Size Limit (per permit)
4WD Day Use (\$10)	1 vehicle
Backpacking (\$30)	Island in the Sky: 7 Needles: 7 Maze: 5
4WD/Mountain Bike (\$30)	Island in the Sky: 15 (3 vehicles) Needles: 10 (3 vehicles) Maze: 9 (3 vehicles)
River Trips (\$30) + \$20 per person	40
Needles Group Sites (\$30) (Does not include nightly fee)	Split Top: 15 (3 vehicles) Wooden Shoe: 25 (5 vehicles) Squaw Flat: 50 (10 vehicles)



# The Needles



## Black Bears

Did you know that Canyonlands is bear country? Black bears wander into the park from nearby mountains, and have been spotted in the Needles, the Maze and along the Colorado River.

Reduce the risk of bear encounters:

- Keep a clean camp and store food items securely. For the protection of bears and humans, it's critical that bears do not gain access to human food. Never eat or store food in your tent. Dispose of food scraps properly (pack it in, pack it out) and don't leave food, dishes or stoves unattended.
- Be alert. Watch for tracks, droppings, diggings, and other bear signs.
- Make noise: help bears to avoid you.

*The above photo was taken by a remote camera in Salt Creek Canyon.*

## Graffiti

### A Growing Problem

Even though graffiti is prohibited by law, rangers and volunteer groups spend hundreds of hours every year removing it in Canyonlands.

Please join us in protecting the park by not leaving your mark. If you discover graffiti in the park, please let us know. Otherwise, make memories, take pictures, but leave no visible trace of your visit.

## Protect Your Park

- Avoid trampling desert soils. Walk on trails, slickrock or in sandy wash bottoms.
- Pets are not allowed on hiking trails or four-wheel-drive roads, even in a vehicle. Pets may be walked along paved roads and in the campground, but must be leashed at all times.
- Protect water sources. Do not swim or bathe in potholes or intermittent streams.
- Protect wild animals. Do not approach or feed them.
- Preserve your heritage. Do not enter, alter or deface archeological sites. Leave artifacts undisturbed.
- It is illegal to remove natural or cultural features including plants, rocks, artifacts, driftwood or antlers.
- Vehicles and bicycles must travel on designated roads.
- ATVs are not permitted.

### VISITOR SERVICES

- Visitor center is open daily mid-February through early December from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving Day and for an extended period during winter.
- Water bottles can be filled at the visitor center and in the campground. Refillable bottles may be purchased in the visitor center.
- Squaw Flat Campground is open year-round on a first-come, first-served basis. There are 26 sites with drinking water and flush toilets. Maximum RV length is 28 feet. Camping fees are charged year-round.

### LONG HIKES

The Needles District offers over 60 miles of interconnecting trails, as challenging as they are rewarding. Many different itineraries are possible, but some of the more popular ones are listed below. Conditions are primitive. Most trails traverse a mixture of slickrock benches and sandy washes. Longer trails are especially rough and require negotiating steep passes with drop-offs, narrow spots, or ladders. Water in the backcountry is unreliable and scarce in some areas. Trails are marked with cairns (small rock piles).

Although most trails can be hiked in a day by strong hikers, many form loops and may be combined with other trails for longer trips. Net elevation change is generally several hundred feet or less, except for the Lower Red Lake Trail, which drops 1,400 feet to the Colorado River.

#### Chesler Park Loop / Joint Trail

Length: 11mi/18km round-trip

Start: Elephant Hill Trailhead

Hiking three miles along this trail brings visitors to a saddle overlooking Chesler Park, a scenic expanse of desert grasses and shrubs surrounded by colorful sandstone spires. The loop around Chesler is fairly level and winds through a series of deep, narrow fractures called the Joint Trail. Five backpacking sites. No water.

#### Elephant Canyon / Druid Arch

Length: 11 mi/18km round-trip

Start: Elephant Hill Trailhead

This trail offers one of the most spectacular views in the Needles. It follows the Chesler Park access trail to Elephant Canyon, then travels along the canyon bottom across a mixture of deep sand and loose rock all the way to its upper end. The last .25 mile is a steep climb involving one ladder and some scrambling. Three backpacking sites. Water available seasonally (inquire at visitor center).

#### Confluence Overlook

Length: 11 mi/18km round-trip

Start: Big Spring Canyon Overlook

This trail traverses mostly dry, open country along the northern edge of the geologic faults that shaped the Needles. Trail ends at a cliff overlooking the junction of the Green and Colorado rivers. There is no trail to the rivers. At-large camping only. No water.

#### Big Spring to Squaw Canyon

Length: 7.5 mi/12km round-trip

Start: Squaw Flat Loop “A” Trailhead

A great introduction to the landscape of the Needles, connecting two canyons for a loop across varied terrain. The route between the canyons climbs steep grades that are dangerous when wet and may make people with a fear of heights uncomfortable. Two backpacking sites in each canyon. Water available seasonally (inquire at visitor center).



Not for the faint of heart: climbing Elephant Hill.



Taking a break in Horse Canyon.



Druid Arch



Chesler Park

#### Lower Red Lake Canyon

Length: 18.8 miles/30 km round-trip

Start: Elephant Hill Trailhead

The hike from Elephant Hill to the Colorado River is very strenuous, with an elevation change of 1,400 feet. There is little shade along the way as the trail climbs in and out of the Grabens and then descends the steep talus slope of Lower Red Lake Canyon toward the river. This trail is recommended as a multi-day hike. At-large camping only. No water before reaching the river.

#### Salt Creek Canyon

Length: 22.5mi/34km one-way

Start: Peekaboo or Cathedral Butte

The trail follows the main drainage of the canyon past cottonwood groves, through thick brush, and down an old four-wheel-drive road. The trail is often obscured by dense vegetation. Many archeological sites and arches can be seen. Four designated campsites in upper section. Lower section (along the old road) is at-large camping only. Water is usually available.

### BACKPACKING

The Needles is the most popular backpacking destination in the park. Most trailheads are accessible by two-wheel-drive vehicle, and water may be found in many of the canyons east of Chesler Park. Overnight trips require a permit which can be reserved in advance (see page 4). Designated campsites (one group per site) have been established along most trails. Groups camp at-large in areas without sites or trails. Status of water sources is available at the visitor center.

### FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE ROADS

Over 50 miles of challenging backcountry roads access campsites, trailheads, as well as natural and cultural features. All of these roads require high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles. Inexperienced drivers are discouraged from attempting these roads as the risk of vehicle damage is great and towing expenses typically exceed \$1,000. The roads in Horse and Lavender canyons tend to be too sandy for mountain bikes. All vehicles and bikes must remain on designated roads. Motorbikes and vehicles must be street legal and operated by a licensed driver. ATVs are not permitted. Roads may close intermittently due to poor driving conditions or weather. Overnight trips require a permit which can be reserved in advance (page 4). Permits are also required for day use in Horse and Lavender canyons.

# The Maze

The Maze is the least accessible district of Canyonlands. Due to the district's remoteness and the difficulty of roads and trails, travel to the Maze requires more time, as well as a greater degree of self-sufficiency. Rarely do visitors spend less than three days in the Maze, and the area can easily absorb a week-long trip.

The Orange Cliffs Unit of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area shares Canyonlands National Park's western boundary and is administered under the same backcountry management plan and reservation system. The information here applies to both the Orange Cliffs Unit and the Maze District of Canyonlands.

### LOCATION

The Hans Flat Ranger Station is two and one-half hours from Green River, Utah. From I-70, take Utah Highway 24 south for 24 miles. A left hand turn just beyond the turnoff to Goblin Valley State Park will take you along a two-wheel-drive dirt road 46 miles (76 km) southeast to the ranger station. In addition, a four-wheel-drive route leads north from Utah Highway 95 near Hite. All two-wheel-drive roads may require four-wheel-drive or become impassable when it snows, rains heavily or when areas of deep, blown sand develop.

### VISITOR SERVICES

The Hans Flat Ranger Station is open year-round from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There is a small sales area with books and maps. There are no amenities like food or gas, no entrance fees and no potable water sources in the Maze District.

### HIKING & BACKPACKING

Trails in the Maze are primitive and lead into canyons and to various viewpoints. Due to the nature and depth of Maze canyons, access to them is limited. Routes into the canyons are minimally cairned from mesa top to canyon bottom, but routes through washes are often unmarked. Many of the canyons look alike and are difficult to identify without a topographic map. The Maze Overlook Trail and other routes in the district require basic climbing maneuvers in order to negotiate sections of steep slickrock and pour-offs. A 25-foot length of rope is often essential for raising or lowering packs in difficult spots. Many routes may make hikers with a fear of heights uncomfortable.

Most trailheads start from four-wheel-drive roads. Visitors with two-wheel-drive vehicles may park at the North Point Road junction, approximately 2.5 miles southeast of the Hans Flat Ranger Station, and hike 12 miles to the Maze Overlook. Depending on the vehicle, hikers may also be able to negotiate the 14 mile road to park at the top of the Flint Trail switchbacks.

# Leave no Trace

### YOUR STEPS MATTER

Protect park soils by walking on trails, rock or in sandy washes. All vehicles, bikes and horses must stay on designated roads. Read more on the front page.

### BACKCOUNTRY SANITATION

The desert environment does not promote decomposition like a forest. Whenever possible, human waste should be removed from the backcountry. In some areas, visitors are required to bring their own toilet systems. Backpackers are encouraged to use human waste disposal bags, especially near designated sites. Bags must be of the type that use dry chemicals/enzymes to render solid human waste into a nonhazardous product that can be thrown in the garbage. *Waste disposal bags should not be deposited in vault toilets.* Solid waste may also be buried in a hole at least four inches deep and 300 feet away from water sources or campsites. Toilet paper must be packed out.

### FOOD STORAGE

Food should be hung up in an animal-proof stuff sack or packed away at all times to prevent birds, rodents and other animals from reaching it. Camps should be kept as clean as possible to prevent ants and mice, which often attract snakes and scorpions, from becoming a problem at popular sites. Some camps are in bear territory and require special precautions. *All garbage should be packed out.*

### WATER

Canyonlands receives only nine inches of rain each year. The lack of water makes it a precious resource for wildlife and hikers. Whenever possible, pack in your own supply and leave existing springs and pools for the plants and animals whose lives depend on them. Never contaminate desert water sources with soaps or lotions, even if they are biodegradable.



The Chocolate Drops as seen from Maze Overlook.

Backpackers stay in at-large zones. There are several springs in the canyons of the Maze. Inquire at the Hans Flat Ranger Station for more information.

### BACKCOUNTRY ROADS

Four-wheel-drive roads in the Maze are extremely difficult, present considerable risk of vehicle damage, and should not be attempted by inexperienced drivers. A high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle is required for all Maze backcountry roads (all-wheel-drive vehicles do not have the low gearing required). ATVs are not permitted. The most commonly used road in the Maze is the Flint Trail, which traverses slopes of clay that are extremely slippery when wet. The Flint Trail is often closed during winter. The road between Teapot camp and the Land of Standing Rocks is the most difficult in the Maze. Four-wheel drivers should be prepared to make basic road or vehicle repairs and should carry the following items: at least one full-size spare tire, extra gas, extra water, a shovel, a high-lift jack and, from October to April, chains for all four tires.

Backcountry vehicle campers and mountain bikers stay in designated sites and must provide their own toilet systems. The vehicle sites do not have picnic tables.

### CULTURAL SITES

The archeological record in Canyonlands spans thousands of years of human habitation. While many sites have endured the harsh desert climate for centuries or even millennia, they can be easily damaged by careless hikers. View structures from a distance, and enjoy rock art with your eyes only. All artifacts must remain where you find them.

### CONTAIN YOUR CAMPFIRE

Wood fires are only permitted along the river corridors in Canyonlands. Fires must be contained in a fire pan. White ash that will sink may be scattered in the main river channel. Vehicle campers may have charcoal fires for cooking (also in a fire pan), but all fire debris must be removed from the backcountry

## Pack & Saddle Regulations

People have explored the canyonlands area on horseback for over a hundred years. In fact, many routes created by cowboys and shepherders have become popular four-wheel-drive roads and hiking trails. However, resource concerns, including disease transmission from stock to wild animals and the spread of exotic plant species, have necessitated special regulations for visitors wishing to ride in the park today. Lack of water is a limiting factor for pack and saddle trips in Canyonlands, as only a few areas have reliable sources.

Pack and saddle stock may be taken on all backcountry roads and in Horseshoe Canyon. Cross-country travel is prohibited. Pack and saddle stock include horses, burros or mules. Pets are prohibited in the backcountry.

### Day Use

Day use permits are unlimited and free of charge, except in Horse/Salt Creek and Lavender Canyons in the Needles District, where day use is limited to seven animals per day. In these areas, permits are available through the reservation system and fees are charged. In all other areas of the park, including Horseshoe Canyon, group size must not exceed ten animals and ten people.

### Overnight Use

Overnight trips must stay at designated vehicle camps. Permits are \$30. All manure and feed must be packed out from the campsites. The group size limit is seven people and ten horses for the Needles and Island in the Sky, and five people and eight horses for the Maze and Orange Cliffs. Overnight use is not allowed in Horseshoe Canyon.

For a complete list of regulations, visit [www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/stockuse.htm](http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/stockuse.htm).



Removing artifacts like this piece of pottery from the park destroys the archeological record—and robs future hikers of the thrill of discovery. It is also a federal offense. Leave things where you find them.

# The Rivers



Sunrise on the Colorado River in Meander Canyon.

The Colorado and Green rivers wind through the heart of Canyonlands, cutting through layers of sandstone to form two deep canyons. The calm waters of these two rivers join at the Confluence, below which their combined flow spills down Cataract Canyon with remarkable speed and power, creating a world-class stretch of white water.

Flat water trips consist of floating down either of the rivers as far as the Confluence or Spanish Bottom. There are no rapids above the Confluence in the park, making it an ideal trip for canoes, sea kayaks and other calm water boats. Below Spanish Bottom, Cataract Canyon contains fourteen miles of rapids ranging in difficulty from Class II to V: it is a particularly hazardous and isolated section of the Colorado River and should not be attempted by inexperienced boaters.

There are no facilities or potable water sources along the rivers in Canyonlands. River trips must be self-sufficient and are required to carry a cleanable, reusable toilet system.

## PERMITS

Permits are required for all overnight river trips in Canyonlands, and for one-day Cataract trips (fee charged). River permits are issued by email from the Reservation Office, and may be obtained no more than four months before a trip's start date. Canyonlands does not restrict launch dates. The maximum group size is 40 people, though to preserve the wilderness character of the river the park suggests groups be limited to sixteen. See page four for more information on permits.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages the riverways upstream of the park boundary on both rivers. Permits are required for boating the Green River between Green River State Park and Mineral Bottom (Labyrinth Canyon). There is no charge for Labyrinth permits. If a reservation form is submitted for boating the Green River within Canyonlands and your launch location is in Labyrinth Canyon, the required interagency permit will be included. Permits are not required for the Colorado between Moab and the park.

## LAUNCH/TAKEOUT INFORMATION

The most common river launch ramps are outside the park boundaries at Ruby Ranch or Mineral Bottom on the Green, and Potash or the Moab dock on the Colorado. Green River State Park and Ruby Ranch both charge a small fee for launches. Call Ruby Ranch at (435) 650-3193, or Green River State Park at (435) 564-3633 for more information.

There is no vehicle access to the rivers near the Confluence or Cataract Canyon. Groups wishing to avoid the white water must travel upstream. Unless groups have their own motors or a lot of time to paddle, upstream travel is via jet boat shuttle back to Potash. This service is available for a fee from two licensed operators: Tag-a-Long Expeditions, (435) 259-8946, and Tex's Riverways, (435) 259-5101.

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Flat water trips should make their upstream travel arrangements before contacting the park for a permit. Shuttles are limited, while there is currently no limit to the number of flat water permits. The National Park Service does not operate a shuttle service.

The takeout for Cataract Canyon trips is usually Hite Marina on Lake Powell, which can be up to 30 miles from the last rapid. Conditions on Lake Powell vary widely: visit [www.nps.gov/cany/river/lakepowell.htm](http://www.nps.gov/cany/river/lakepowell.htm) to learn more.

## CAMPING

There are no designated campsites along the rivers in Canyonlands. During periods of high water, camps can be difficult to find, especially for large groups. Other times, sandbars can be plentiful and make ideal camps. In Cataract Canyon, there is a voluntary campsite sign-up register for groups traveling below the Confluence.

## FISHING

Fishing is not a popular activity in Canyonlands. The muddy waters of the Green and Colorado rivers contain mostly carp, catfish, sand shiners, red shiners and fathead minnows. Visitors must have a valid Utah State fishing license and must comply with all state fishing regulations. Small populations of endangered native fish exist in the park, including Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, humpback and bonytail chub. Due to resource development, competition with non-native species and other factors, native populations have declined and are struggling to survive in the Upper Colorado River Basin. Visitors should become familiar with the above fish and the proper techniques for releasing them unharmed.

## River Distances & Float Times

Launch Location	Launch Fee?†	Miles to Confluence	Days*
<b>Colorado River</b>			
Moab	no	63	3 to 5
Potash	no	48	2 to 3
<b>Green River</b>			
Green River State Park	yes	122	6 to 9
Crystal Geyser	no	118	6 to 9
Ruby Ranch	yes	99	5 to 8
Mineral Bottom	no	54	3 to 4
<b>Cataract Canyon</b>			
Confluence to Hite	no	45 miles	2 to 3

† Launch fees are not charged or collected by the National Park Service.  
\* Estimated times. Actual float times will vary with river conditions.



## Packrafts

Does your backpacking trip involve a brief float down one of the rivers? Groups using portable, inflatable boats to navigate short sections (two miles or less) of the Colorado or Green rivers must carry the following items:

- PFD for each person. An inflatable USCG approved life vest may be used in place of a regular PFD for anyone over 12 years of age.
- Approved toilet system. Commercial bag systems such as PETT, Wag Bag, or Rest Stop II that render human waste non-hazardous.

Groups using packrafts just to cross the rivers are exempt from these requirements.

Groups traveling more than two miles must obtain a river permit and are subject to river regulations and required equipment.

## Have a Safe Visit

Every year, rangers respond to dozens of search & rescue incidents in the park. For your own safety, please keep the following in mind throughout your visit:

- Carry and drink water. Even a short stroll will make you thirsty on a 90°F (32°C) day. One gallon (4 liters) per person per day is recommended for longer hikes. Water is available at visitor centers and at the Squaw Flat Campground.
- Wear sturdy shoes with adequate tread. Many trails cross uneven terrain and follow rock ledges that require good traction.
- Protect your skin with a hat, long-sleeved shirt and sunscreen.
- Use caution when climbing or scrambling on rocks. Sandstone is slippery when wet or snow covered: it is also much easier to go up than down.
- Always tell someone where you're going and when you expect to return. If you become lost, remain in one place: wandering will make finding you more difficult.
- Severe lightning occurs here. Return to your vehicle if possible. Stay away from open areas, high spots or trees. If your skin tingles or hair stands on end, crouch down and place both feet together firmly on the ground.