



Visitor Guide



101 Years Old – And We've Just Begun

Colorado National Monument seems timeless with rock layers millions of years old and many of its Utah juniper trees over 500 years old. Dedicated by President Taft in 1911 for “extraordinary examples of erosion,” the spectacular landscape of this park looks much the same today as it would have hundreds or even thousands of years ago.

But Colorado National Monument has evolved over the past century to become a popular destination. In the early 20th century local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce hoped that national monument designation would increase tourism; however, visitation was scant. Because there was no road that ran along the canyon rim, only a few hundred hearty souls trekked their way through the Monument each year by foot or on horseback.

The road-building project of Rim Rock Drive in the 1930s transformed tourism. In 1937, after 20 miles of road and two tunnels were completed, visitation shot up to 20,000. Even before the road was completed in 1950 it was busy enough to justify the construction of an entrance station near the turnoff to the campground. A brochure published in 1940 states: “An annual permit for the operation of a motor vehicle over the roads of the Monument is obtainable at the Checking Station for 50 cents. This permit, good throughout the calendar year in which it was purchased, must be retained in the car to which it is issued.” Thirteen years later, in 1953, the annual entrance permit fee was still 50 cents. The scenic Rim Rock Drive ran through the park, but there was no Visitor Center. That wasn’t built for another decade, in 1963.

Since then, visitor services have expanded greatly. Today the Visitor Center boasts new state-of-the-art exhibits, provides free informative brochures, and two educational twelve minute video programs. Thousands of youngsters take part in our Junior Ranger program and ranger guided education programs each year. The store, operated by the Colorado National Monument Association, sells educational items and Monument related gifts. But among

all these changes, the natural beauty remains unchanged. This stunning geologic gem now attracts over 430,000 recreational visitors to Colorado National Monument each year.



Welcome, or welcome back to Colorado National Monument, a northern entry to the Colorado Plateau, an area that encompasses “red rock” across four southwestern states.

The national significance of the “Monument” as this area is fondly referred, are the erosional monoliths or statuesque rock pillars located within Monument Canyon. The fact that one can experience canyon views from vistas gazing downward is due to the strength and determination of members of the C.C.C., W.P.A. and Local Experienced Men. During the 1930s, these men designed and blasted much of today’s road. Trace time further into the past and tales describe the dedication of trailblazer John Otto leading to the 1911 establishment of this park unit. Predating those remarkable feats are the unrecorded stories from indigenous people that walked through these canyons and plateaus.

As you drive or bicycle sections of Rim Rock Drive today, stop at the many overlooks. Your senses may become more attuned as you hear white-throated swifts whizzing by . . . or perhaps you hear absolutely nothing. The “Monument” is one of 397 units of the National Park System, a giant “treasure box” awaiting exploration and protected for generations to come. The staff and National Park Service, together with the Colorado National Monument Association, welcome you and thank you for taking the time to experience this very special place.

Lisa E. Eckert
Superintendent



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Window Rock, or as John Otto called it Needle's Eye.



Spectacular view from the Canyon Rim Trail.

What to Call a Monolith (*Besides Big*)

Curious visitors to Colorado National Monument often ask, “Like, where’s the monument?” Park rangers are often tempted to say, “You’re, like, looking at it.”

That would leave many visitors scratching their heads. People from as near as Denver and as far as Denmark get confused upon arrival. They expect to find a shiny bronze plaque bolted to a big chunk of hand-carved stone, something resembling Webster’s definition of monument: “a tablet, statue, pillar, or building.”

But Colorado National Monument is a 20,000-acre park unit. And within that park unit rises a 450-foot sandstone monolith (a large free standing rock formation) named Independence Monument. A pair of monuments, both with names that have become familiar to locals, continue to confuse newcomers. No wonder visitors scratch their heads.

If neither Colorado National Monument nor the monolith fits our conventional image of “monument,” that’s OK. There is nothing conventional about this extraordinary place. It is truly unconventional, just like John Otto, the Monument’s founder. This rugged conservationist in his cowboy hat and droopy mustache labored alone among the geological wonders that became Colorado National Monument in 1911. This special place not only changed his life – he changed it too. Otto lived in the canyons, carved trails with iron tools, erected barbed wire fences, and chiseled handholds for climbing Wingate sandstone walls.

He also took it upon himself to name many of the monoliths. Names such as “Needle’s Eye,” “King

Apple’s Castle,” and “Temple Rock,” were all his doing. He christened Monument Canyon’s iconic spire “Independence.” Otto, a proud patriot, honored Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, McKinley and Wilson by naming monoliths after them.

Many formations bear names that others, following in Otto’s boot prints, have bestowed on them. Upper Monument Canyon has Grand View Spire and Kissing Couple. Lower Monument and Wedding canyons share Praying Hands, Sentinel Spire, Pipe Organ and Mushroom Rock. Marching alongside Rim Rock Drive are Balanced Rock, Saddlehorn and the exotically named Cleopatra’s Couch. Rock climbers made contributions, including Clueless and Rainbow towers, both of which cast their shadows in Upper Monument Canyon.

Some names have withstood the test of time, while others have disappeared from the lexicon. Others have changed over time. What Otto called “King Apple’s Castle” became “Devils Kitchen.” One of the Monument’s most distinctive symbols of erosion—a gigantic hole through sandstone overlooking Fruita, lies at the end of a mile-long trail near the Visitor Center. Otto named this, “Needle’s Eye.” Today, it is “Window Rock.” Otto called the distinctive beehive-shaped formations “Haystacks.” They later were renamed “Coke Ovens,” possibly by the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) in the 1930s.

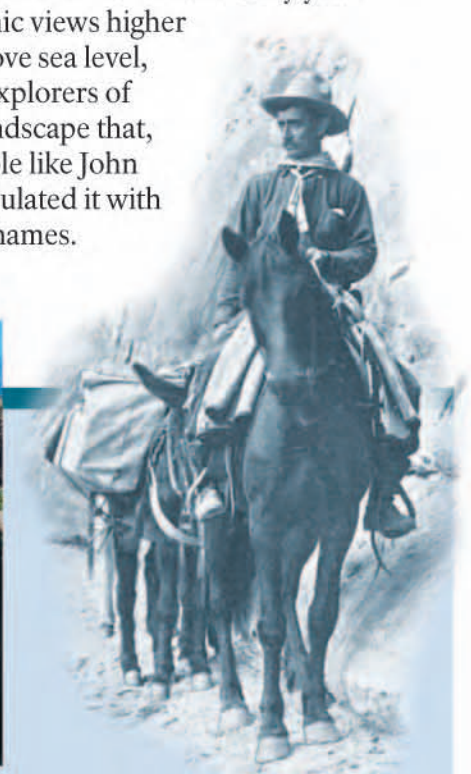
Otto also described the canyons’ powerful allure: “They felt like the heart of the world to me,” Otto wrote. “I stayed and promoted this place; God’s monument to himself to remind his people of his glory. Colorado National Monument is the



Haystacks were renamed Coke Ovens.

greatest spot in creation. If you will get acquainted with it and study it you will say so yourself.”

Today visitors from all around the world “get acquainted” with the Monument every year. From panoramic views higher than a mile above sea level, they become explorers of this ancient landscape that, thanks to people like John Otto, have populated it with unforgettable names.



Just more than 100 years later, tributes have been paid to John Otto’s dedication in Rocky Mountain PBS’s Emmy-winning documentary (*being filmed right*) and in a larger than life Legends Historic Sculpture on Main Street in Grand Junction (*left, during installation*).



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Hiking Safety Tips



Colorado National Monument contains rugged and remote landscapes.

- Always be prepared by carrying a map, compass, extra water, food, first aid kit, and extra clothing.
- Be sure you tell someone where you’re going and when you expect to return.
- Cell phone service is not reliable.

- Watch your step and your children at overlooks, along canyon rims, and by steep drop-offs.
- Carry a sufficient amount of water for this hot desert climate. Use sunscreen. Wear sturdy footwear and a hat.
- Biting gnats can be a problem from May to August. Bring insect repellent.
- Watch where you put your feet and hands. You share the land with rattlesnakes and scorpions.
- From April through July seasonal pools may exist in the canyon bottoms. Please do not enter these pools. Sunscreens and lotions pollute these ephemeral waters that are important to wildlife.
- Avoid ridge tops and open ground during lightning storms.

Visitor Services

Entrance Fees

Private, non-commercial vehicle: \$10
 Individual (hiker, bicyclist): \$5
 Motorcyclist: \$5

Good for seven consecutive days.
 Fees apply to those 16 years old and older.



Visit as much as you want during the year with a National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Annual Pass: \$80 and Senior Pass: \$10
 Colorado National Monument Annual Park Pass: \$25

Visitor Center



For information, orientation, maps, books, and free handouts, the Visitor Center is a good place to start your adventure.

From there, you can explore the exhibit room, access three trailheads, and enjoy scenic views. Don't miss the 12 minute geology and introductory videos — both shown upon request.

The Colorado National Monument Association store sells a variety of educational and interpretive items as well as T-shirts and hats. The Visitor Center is open every day, except

December 25, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the winter and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the summer. Set aside 45 minutes for this stop.

Park Road

Rim Rock Drive is built through areas of unstable geologic rock formations. As a result, rocks and boulders may break loose and fall onto the road, posing a hazard to people and vehicles. Use the following guidelines for your safety:

- Pay close attention to the slopes above you and to all traffic signs.
- Watch for rocks in the road.
- Do not attempt to move rocks or boulders if blocking the road. Call a park ranger at 970-858-3617 x360
- In case of emergency dial 911.

Picnicking

Located throughout the park are three picnic areas: Saddlehorn Visitor Center, Saddlehorn Campground, and Devils Kitchen. All have tables, water, and restrooms. The Visitor Center and Devils Kitchen Picnic Areas have shade shelter.

Camping

Saddlehorn Campground, located near the Visitor Center, has 80 first come, first served sites. Open year round.

- The self-registration kiosk is located at the campground entrance.

- The camping fee is in addition to the Monument entrance fee; the fee is \$20.00 per night with two cars, three tents, and a seven person per site limit.
- Recreational vehicles have a length limit of 40 feet.
- Restrooms have flush toilets and potable water.
- Sites include a picnic table and charcoal only grill.
- No electric hookups, showers, or wood campfires.
- Two accessible sites are available.
- Check out time is 11 a.m.
- Quiet time is from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Restrooms

Restrooms are located at the Visitor Center, campground, Saddlehorn Picnic Area and Devils Kitchen Picnic Area.

Backcountry Camping

A backcountry permit is required. Obtain the free permit at the Visitor Center.

NO water exists in the backcountry! Potable water is available at the Visitor Center.

Accessibility

- Accessible Picnic Areas: The Visitor Center and Devils Kitchen Picnic Areas.



New exhibits!

The Saddlehorn Visitor Center offers new interactive exhibits. Come in and take a look!



- Accessible restrooms: The Visitor Center, Saddlehorn Campground, and Devils Kitchen Picnic Area.
- Accessible overlooks: Independence Monument View, Cold Shivers Point and Book Cliffs View.
- Additional information is on the website: www.nps.gov/colm

Pets

Pets are allowed only in parking lots or in the campground. They must be on a leash at all times. Pets are not permitted on trails or in the Visitor Center. **WARNING: DO NOT** leave pets in vehicles during hot summer temperatures!

Plan Your Visit - 4 Itineraries

Few Hours

Cruise the historic Rim Rock Drive, enjoy the steep canyon walls, towering monoliths, and balanced rocks. The entire road is 23 miles, about a one-hour drive, from gate-to-gate. This road was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corp (C.C.C.) in the 1930s. Stop and enjoy the views at popular overlooks like Balanced Rock View, Fruita Canyon View, Book Cliffs View, Independence Monument View, Artist Point, Ute Canyon View, and Cold Shivers Point. Stretch your legs at the Visitor Center by enjoying the new exhibits!

Half Day

In addition to cruising Rim Rock Drive and stopping by the Visitor Center, explore several of the Monument's short hikes. The Canyon Rim and Alcove Trails, near the Visitor Center, are each 1 mile roundtrip and offer a vast variety of desert hiking.

Attend a Ranger Program at the Visitor Center and learn about the geology, ecology, and history of the Monument. Programs are offered daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Full Day

Extend the half day plan by checking out more of our short trails. Otto's Trail, Coke Ovens Trail and Devils Kitchen Trail are each a great way to experience more of the Monument.

If you are ready for a longer hike, Monument Canyon will entice you with views of our unique monoliths. From the lower trailhead, it is a moderate 2.5 mile hike (one-way) to the base of Independence Monument. From there, you can continue exploring, passing the Kissing Couple monolith on your way to the upper trailhead at Rim Rock Drive which is 6 miles (one-way) from the lower trailhead.

Multiple Days

With over 45 miles of maintained trails, each backcountry trail leads to a different adventure in the Monument! Saddlehorn campground is a great place to set-up camp and start exploring. If you're interested in a backcountry camping permit, ask at the Visitor Center.

Ranger Programs

Guided walks and porch talks are offered daily during the summer. Topics include geology, ecology, and history. Program schedules are posted at the Visitor Center, the campground, and on the website: www.nps.gov/colm/planyourvisit/ranger-led-activities



Scan with your smartphone for current schedule

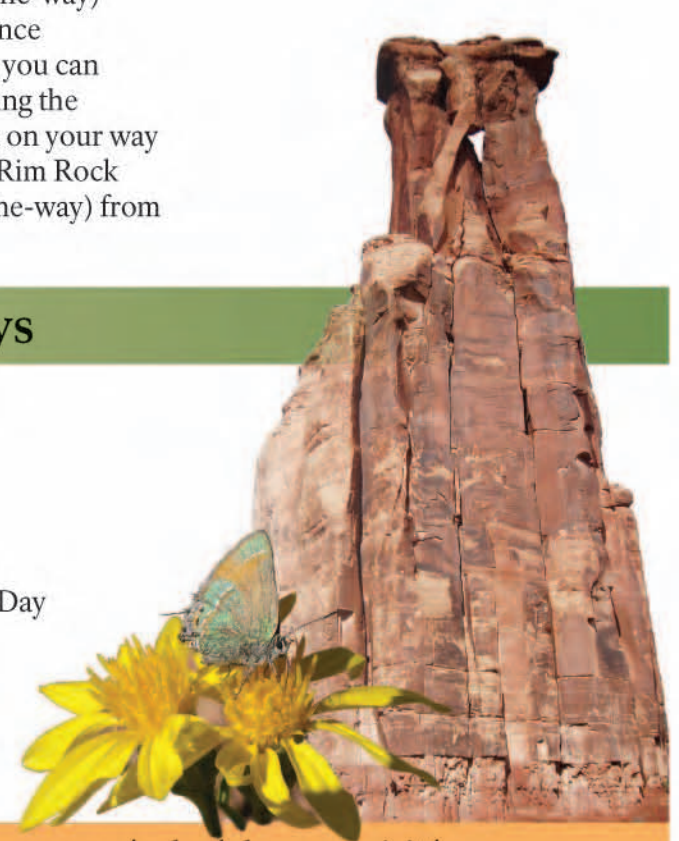
Special Events

- Western Colorado Astronomy Club Star Gazing
 April 21 • May 19 • June 23
 July 28 • August 18
 September 15 • October 13
- Centennial Band Concert
 June 9
- Freedom Flies High
 July 4
- National Public Lands Day
 September 29
- John Otto Day
 October 6

Fee Free Days

- National Park Week
 April 21-29
- Get Outdoors Day
 June 9
- National Public Lands Day
 September 29
- Veterans Weekend
 November 10-12

More info: www.nps.gov/colm/planyourvisit/





RANGER PICKS



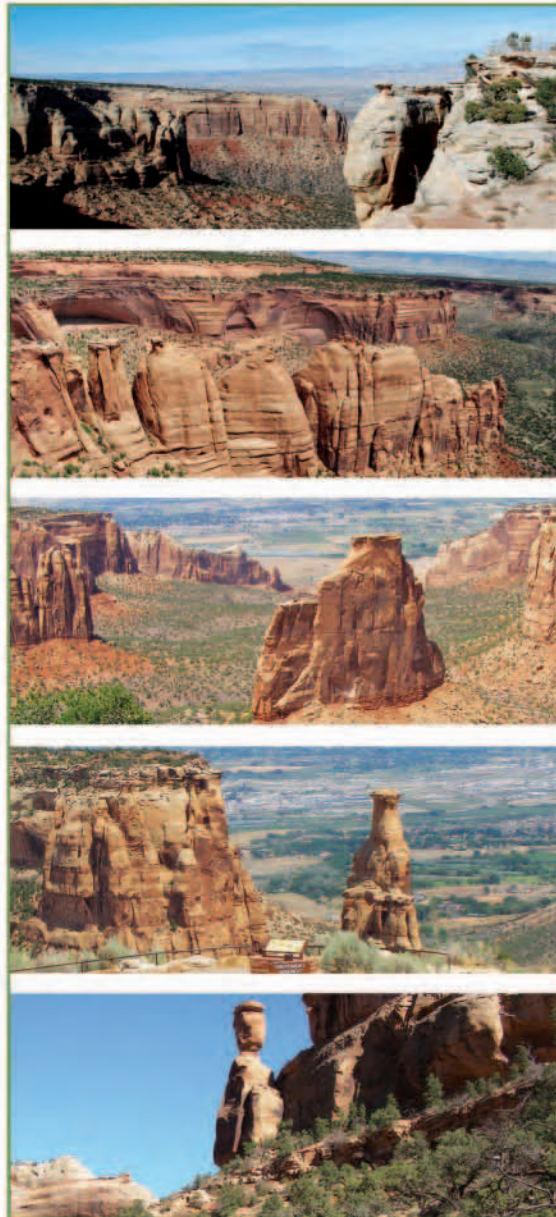
Rim Rock Drive Delivers Spectacular Vistas


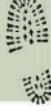



One of the grandest scenic drives in the American West, 23-mile Rim Rock Drive, offers red rock canyons, crisp blue skies, and green junipers for motorists and bicyclists to enjoy.

This road is inseparable from the identity of the Monument. The drive provides access to Saddlehorn Visitor Center and campground, 19 signed overlooks, and 14 hiking trails. Allow at least one hour driving time, plus additional time for walking, photography, or stopping at pullouts.

Please use caution as you drive the road and watch for wildlife, fallen rocks, and other hazards. Obey posted speed limits and be careful on the narrow shoulders. Watch for bicyclists. "Share the road."

For a more in-depth introduction to the amazing scenery along the park road, please stop by the Visitor Center where *A Guide to the Rim Rock Drive* can be purchased from the Visitor Center store.



OVERLOOK DESCRIPTION	MILES FROM EAST GATE	MILES FROM WEST GATE
1. Cold Shivers Point: an accessible paved path leads to an impressive view into Columbus Canyon 	3.4	19.1
2. Artists Point: offers views of the Coke Ovens and other rock formations from the parking area or a short trail to a fenced overlook 	13.7	8.7
3. Grand View: short trail leads to an impressive view of Independence Monument, a spectacular free standing rock formation. History enthusiasts may be interested in the nearby Half Tunnel exhibit 	16.4	6
4. Independence Monument View: an accessible viewpoint of Independence Monument from a dramatic angle 	16.9	5.5
5. Balanced Rock View: a great place to photograph a rock balancing in mid-air 	21	1.6

Bicycling



Bicycling along Rim Rock Drive

Rim Rock Drive offers sweeping vistas, plenty of fresh air, and varied grades. It has challenged many of the world's strongest riders, but yields to the most casual of recreational bicyclists.

Visitor Center to Artists Point

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate **Distance:** 8.6 miles (round trip)

Elevation gain: minimal, less than 500 feet

Turn left (south) from the Visitor Center parking lot onto Rim Rock Drive. Travel along the rim of Monument Canyon for 4.3 miles to Artists Point. The ride offers incredible views of some of the park's most dramatic rock formations.

The Grand Loop

Difficulty: Difficult **Distance:** 40 miles

Elevation gain: 1,950 feet

Park outside the west (Fruita) entrance to the park and ascend 1,000 feet over four miles of switchbacks. Continue along the top of Rim Rock Drive for 19 miles before descending switchbacks to the east (Grand Junction) entrance to the park. Once beyond the entrance station, continue 3.5 miles to the end of Monument Road. Take a left at the stoplight onto Broadway (Highway 340); it's 13.5 miles back to the west gate.

Hiking Favorites

Monument Canyon Trail

Difficulty: Moderate

Distance: A one-way hike of 6 miles

Elevation: 6,140 to 4,700 feet

Upper Trailhead: From the Visitor Center, turn left onto Rim Rock Drive and proceed 3.8 miles to the trailhead on the left.

Lower Trailhead: From the west entrance, proceed east on Colorado Highway 340. After 2.1 miles turn right just beyond mile marker #5 onto a dirt road that appears to be a driveway. Continue straight 0.1 mile to the parking lot.

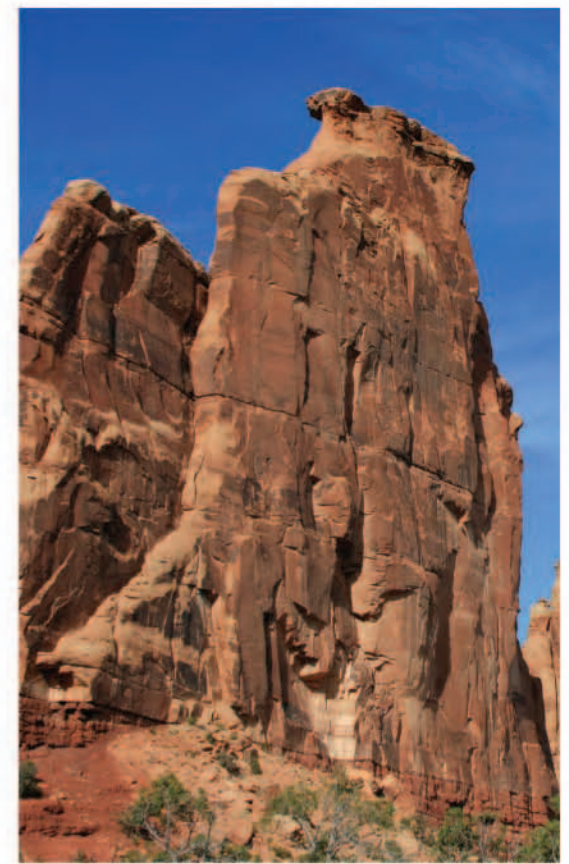
Monument Canyon offers a scenic and memorable day hike through a geological wonderland full of colorful, sheer-walled canyons and towering rock formations, including Independence Monument. Carved over millions of years from a solid wall that separated Monument and Wedding Canyons, Independence Monument is now the largest free-standing rock formation in the park, rising 450 feet from the canyon floor. Great opportunities for photography and wildlife viewing will reward you on this hike in the heart of red rock country.

Otto's Trail

Difficulty: Easy

Distance: A one-way hike of 0.5 miles to the overlook

Trailhead: From the Visitor Center, turn left on Rim Rock Drive and proceed 1.0 mile to trailhead parking on the left.



Hike around Independence Monument

For a short stroll with dramatic views of the Monument's famous monoliths – Pipe Organ, Kissing Couple, and Independence Monument – hike Otto's Trail. The trail travels through pinyon-juniper woodlands to an overlook with breathtaking vistas of Wedding and Monument Canyons. In spring and summer, a variety of flowers and blooming cacti can be enjoyed along the trail.



SAVE with a CNMA ANNUAL PASS



Visit the Colorado National Monument as much as you like during 2012 for \$25 with an Annual Pass. Get yours today at the entrance stations.



Become a Junior Ranger



Hey kids! Head up to the Visitor Center and ask for a free Junior Ranger activity booklet.

How about a hike to explore the incredible red rock canyons and monoliths or to learn about our amazing animals, plants, and rocks? There are three wonderful hikes right outside the Visitor Center, and the Junior Ranger activity booklet has plenty of great ways to investigate this beautiful red rock country.

While at the Visitor Center you can borrow the Junior Ranger explorer backpack (available for a four-hour loan). The pack is full of tools like binoculars, magnifying glasses, and field guides to help sharpen your observation skills. It's a great kit to use on your hike as you work toward earning your Junior Ranger badge.

The Junior Ranger program is designed for children ages 5 to 12, but visitors of any age can become a Junior Ranger!

Once you've completed the booklet take it to the Visitor Center to receive your official Junior Ranger badge and certificate.

BORROW THIS FOR FREE!

You and your family can borrow this Official Junior Ranger backpack at the Visitor Center and start your exploration! Available for a four-hour loan, and it's free!



MATCHIN' TRACKS!

4

Mountain Lion:
You don't usually see my claws in my tracks.

5

Jackrabbit: With my long rear legs I can jump as far as 20 feet.

3

Coyote:
My track may remind you of a pet dog's footprint.

6

Gambel Quail:
I walk on two legs.

2

Bighorn Sheep:
My hooves help me climb rocks!

1

Longnose Leopard Lizard:
My tail drags on the ground.

Monumental Scavenger Hunt!



As you explore Colorado National Monument by car or by foot, how many of these items can you spot? Challenge a friend to see who can get five in a row first, or see if you can find all 25 during your visit here! Remember to leave what you find so others can enjoy also!

Something Soft	Prickly Pear Cactus	Bird	A Root Growing Through a Rock	Trail Sign
Seeds from a Plant	Hard Grey Rock	Lichen	An Insect	A Place Where Water has Carved Rock
Wildflower	An Animal Home	Fill in your own:	A Plant Smaller than Your Finger	A Dry Streambed
Animal Scat (Droppings)	Lizard	A Plant Eaten by an Animal	Rock Made of Sand	Pinecone
Biological Soil Crust	A Ranger	A Natural Sound	Grass (It may not be green)	Any Kind of Animal Track

Draw a line to match each animal to its track. Use the clues to help you. When you hike, look for tracks in soft sand, mud or snow!



Bicycle Safety

- Bicycles are permitted ONLY on Rim Rock Drive and in Saddlehorn Campground.
- Bicycles are prohibited on trails.
- Bicyclists are required to obey all traffic laws including speed limits, passing zones, and stop signs.
- Ride single file at all times.
- Do not pass vehicles in the tunnels.

- Lights required for tunnels: Bicycles (or cyclists) are required to be equipped with a white light that is visible at least 500 feet from the front and a red light that can be seen at least 200 feet from the rear.**

- Caution! East side cyclists may encounter large trucks for the first four miles.

Matchin' Tracks ANSWERS

Coyote - 1 Mountain Lion - 2 Jackrabbit - 3 Gambel Quail - 4 Longnose Leopard Lizard - 5 Bighorn Sheep - 6



MONUMENTAL FACTS



- Colorado National Monument preserves and protects 20,454 acres.
- The Visitor Center sits at an elevation of 5787 feet.
- The highest point on Rim Rock Drive is 6640 feet.
- Rim Rock Drive from gate-to-gate is 23 miles long and is a historic road.
- Independence Monument is a 450 foot tall monolith.
- The ecological habitat of the Monument is a semi-arid desert land.
- The Monument's first custodian, John Otto, was paid \$1 a month to take care of the Monument.
- Every 4th of July the Mesa County Search and Rescue raises the American Flag on top of Independence Monument, a tradition started by John Otto in 1911.

YOUR FEE DOLLARS HAVE BEEN BUSY!

- Make sure to stop by and see the new exhibits in the Visitor Center.
- In the campground, check out the remodeled bathrooms and shade shelter near new accessible campsite in Loop-C. Accessible by paved paths too!



- Watch for new, updated wayside panels along Rim Rock Drive!



User Fees
Improve this park

New Native Garden Trail



Local 4th graders work with Northern Ute students to create a native plant garden.

While you are here, make sure to stop at the native plant garden located at Ute Canyon View. Last year, Colorado National Monument was one of 24 national parks selected to take part in the National Park Foundation's First Bloom garden design program.

Fourth grade students from Dual Immersion Academy in Grand Junction, Colorado, and the Northern Ute Reservation in Fort Duchesne, Utah, designed and planted the native plant garden.

Students wanted the garden to teach visitors about Ute Indians living in this region and the plants and animals they relied on for survival. Ute Canyon View seemed like an appropriate site for their project.

Throughout the year, the fourth graders learned about the difference between native plants and invasive species, drought-tolerant plants, traditional plant use, and garden design techniques during fieldtrips and monthly classroom visits from education rangers.

The students worked in groups to map out sections of the garden area and carefully planned where to plant the various species of native plants based on sun and shade conditions. They even tested soil samples to decide which native plants to select for their sections. In early May, with garden designs in hand and prime planting conditions, the fourth graders spent an entire day prepping their garden sections and planting over 300 native plants.

Take a few minutes to enjoy the lovely results of all their hard work. The ¼ mile trail through the garden features a variety of native plant species and educational signs about traditional Ute uses of local plants and animals. This year-long project was made possible by a generous donation from the National Park Foundation.



Students working together carry plants along the new trail.



Students learn about each native plant and carefully plant this sage in a new home.



Dual Immersion Academy Fourth Graders and Colorado National Monument's Education Rangers



DON'T BUST THE CRUST!



Have you noticed the bumpy, knobby, and sometimes dark soil along the trails? That's biological soil crust. Just as coral reefs are formed over time by many small organisms living together, soil crust is formed the same way.

Moss, lichen, green algae, cyanobacteria (sigh-AN-oh bacteria), and microfungi all work together to hold sand grains in place and create an environment where seeds can grow.

Biological soil crust is extremely slow growing. A footprint can erase decades of growth. You can help protect the crust by staying on established trails.

WATCHABLE WILDLIFE

The Monument's first custodian, John Otto, had visions for this to be a wildlife park where visitors would flock to see elk and bison – like Yellowstone. He raised funds to introduce both of these species and there was even a bison herd in the canyons from 1926-1983. But alas, this landscape does not support the same types of large animal herds as Yellowstone. The native species here are desert dwellers - a hearty group that employ many strategies to survive in this dry climate and steep terrain.

Many animals that live here are nocturnal to avoid the heat of the day. Therefore seeing animals is not a guarantee. Follow these tips to appreciate the desert dwellers:

- Look for tracks especially in soft sand.
- Examine scat (with a stick!) to learn about an animal's eating habits.
- Close your eyes and listen for animal sounds.
- Bend down and look low to get a different perspective.

The animals profiled here are some of the more commonly spotted in the Monument. Please give all wild animals, regardless of size, your respect.

- View from a safe distance – safe for you and safe for the wildlife.
- Help keep them wild – never feed or approach wild animals.
- Using binoculars is a great way to see more animals and give them space.

Desert Bighorn Sheep

Desert bighorn sheep have adapted to hot, dry climates and have longer legs, lighter coats and smaller bodies than Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. Desert bighorn are often seen along ledges at the base of canyon walls and above steep talus slopes along Rim Rock Drive, in Fruita Canyon near Balanced Rock View, and behind the Saddlehorn Visitor Center near Wedding Canyon viewpoint.



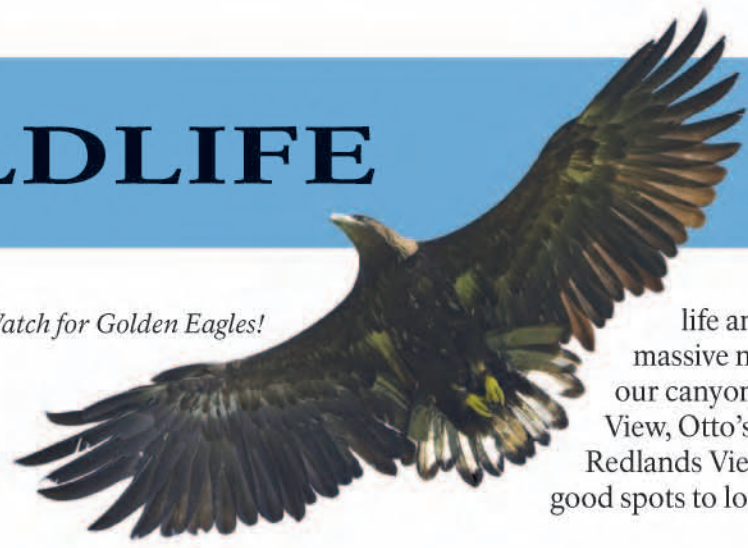
Desert Bighorn Sheep ram

Monument. With a wingspan of 6-7 ft. this impressive bird of prey makes flying look effortless, especially when compared to the more common turkey vultures which can seem a bit wobbly. Golden eagles will mate for

Golden Eagle

It's a moment to pause in awe and admiration when you see a golden eagle soaring on thermals above the cliffs of the

Watch for Golden Eagles!

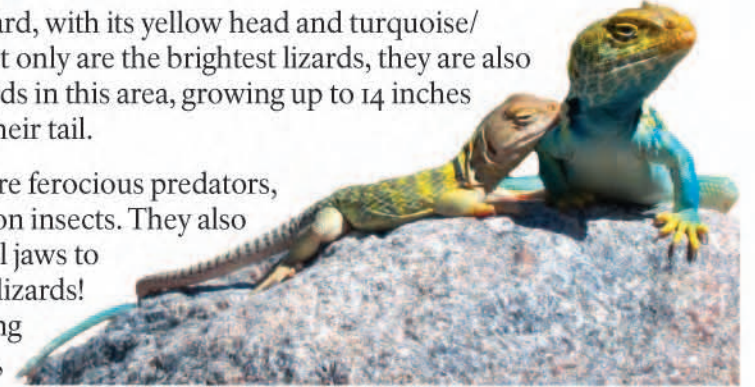


life and they build massive nests of sticks on our canyon walls. Grand View, Otto's Trail and Redlands View and are all good spots to look for eagles.

Collared Lizard

The Collared Lizard, with its yellow head and turquoise/greenish body, not only are the brightest lizards, they are also the largest of lizards in this area, growing up to 14 inches long - including their tail.

Collared lizards are ferocious predators, who feed mainly on insects. They also use their powerful jaws to kill and eat other lizards! Capable of running on their hind legs, collared lizards can sprint over 10 feet per second.



Subadult female and adult male collared lizards.

Good places to spot collared lizards are near Devils Kitchen Picnic Area and in No Thoroughfare Canyon. Keep your distance. They can bite!

Jerusalem Cricket

With a large head and striped abdomen, the Jerusalem cricket has inspired many common names such as "old bald-headed man," "child of the earth," and "potato bug." Each of these names holds a clue about this fascinating insect. Although not a true cricket, it is a relative. Its head is large and bald and it does spend much of its life underground eating roots (and sometimes other insects). Fall is a likely time to spot these large (1-2 inches long) insects above ground on rocks or near the Visitor Center. As with all wildlife, large or small, watch them from a respectful distance. With their large jaws, they can bite if provoked.



Jerusalem Cricket

Wondering About Wingate?



It's big. It's bold. It's bright. The Wingate Sandstone makes a sweeping statement all across the Colorado Plateau. But here at Colorado National Monument, with its sheer cliffs and towering monoliths standing tall and proud, this rock layer simply cannot be missed.

We owe our limitless birds-eye view along Rim Rock Drive to the Wingate Sandstone. The Wingate also inspires our awe and wonder when we stand at the bottom of the canyon and gaze up at massive reddish-orange cliff walls. Many visitors wonder how this giant rock layer formed and where it came from. If you look closely, the fine grained sand, thin horizontal layers, and sweeping crossbeds serve as clues to the mystery of how this rock was formed long ago...

Imagine this western Colorado landscape covered with large sand dunes, as far as the eye could see. The dunes started small in size 200 million years before today, but for close to three and a half million years, with the help of prevailing winds, they grew little by little to estimated heights of 100 to 150 feet tall.

The Wingate Sandstone is the pedestal of Colorado National Monument and the icon of much of the Colorado Plateau. Learn to recognize its unique characteristics and identify it on your travels. When you see Wingate, you know you are in canyon country!

Layers in Fruita Canyon, view from Balanced Rock.



Wingate Sandstone crossbedding.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Wingate Sandstone is the oldest member of the Glen Canyon Group, a collection of rock layers which are visible in Canyonlands, Arches, Capitol Reef, and Zion National Parks.
- Wingate Sandstone was named for outcrops near Fort Wingate, New Mexico, by geologist Clarence Dutton in 1884.

Q: Why was the environment a sand dune desert about 200 million years ago?

A: Early Jurassic Colorado was approximately 10 degrees north of the equator and extremely dry and arid, much like that same latitude is today.

Tunnel Safety

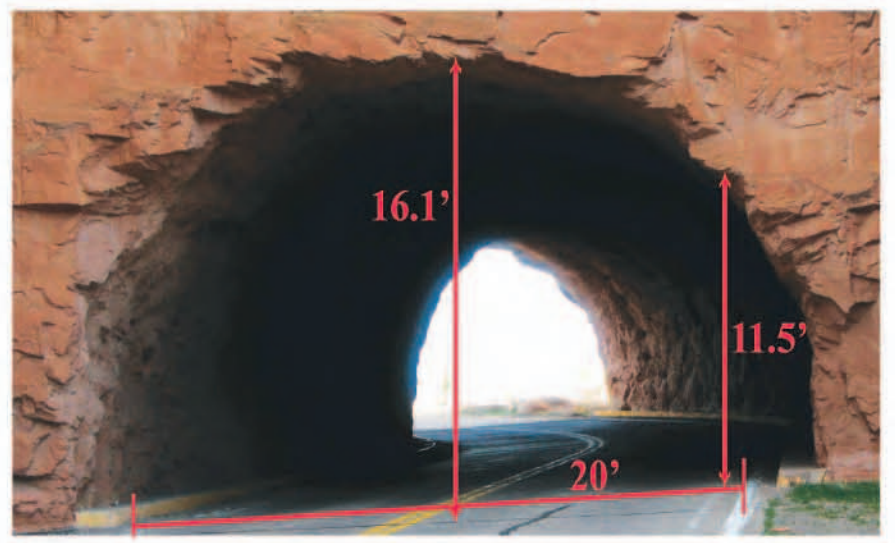
Rim Rock Drive has three tunnels that were blasted and shaped in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.). You will pass through two short, curved tunnels on the west side and one long, straight tunnel on the east side. It is your responsibility to know the height and length of your vehicle.

TUNNEL SAFETY

- All vehicles proceed with extreme caution.
- Lights required.
- Watch out for bicyclists.
- Do not pass bicyclists or vehicles.
- Be on guard for large vehicles and RVs.
- No pedestrians in or around the tunnels.

TUNNEL CLEARANCES

- Lower west tunnel: 16' 1" high at center line; 11' 5" - 2 ft. from curb; 236 ft. in length
- Upper west tunnel: 16' 1" high at center line; 11' 5" - 2 ft. from curb; 182 ft. in length
- East tunnel: 16' 2" high at center line; 11' 5" - 2 ft. from curb; 530 ft. in length



Area Info / Distances

Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road Grand Junction, CO 81506
(970) 244-3000 www.co.blm.gov

Colorado National Monument
1750 Rim Rock Dr. Fruita, CO 81521
(970) 858-3617 www.nps.gov/colm

Colorado State Parks
361 32 Road Clifton, CO 81520
(970) 434-6862 www.parks.state.co.us

Colorado Welcome Center
340 Hwy 340 Fruita, CO 81521
(970) 858-9335
www.colorado.com/fruitawelcomecenter.aspx

Fruita Chamber of Commerce
432 East Aspen Ave.
Fruita, CO 81521 www.fruitachamber.org

Grand Junction Visitor & Convention Bureau
740 Horizon Dr. Grand Junction, CO 81506
800-962-2547 www.visitgrandjunction.com

US Forest Service
2777 Crossroads Blvd. Unit 1
Grand Junction, CO 81506
(970) 242-8211 www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug

Arches National Park:
113 miles www.nps.gov/arch

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park:
86.8 miles www.nps.gov/blca

Canyonlands National Park:
120 miles www.nps.gov/cany

Dinosaur National Monument:
147 miles www.nps.gov/dino

SUNRISE & SUNSET TIME CHART – The Colorado National Monument is a beautiful place to watch the sun rise and set. Below are approximate times throughout the year that you can catch the painted skies. Bring a camera!

	January		February		March		April		May		June	
	1st	15th	1st	15th	1st	15th	1st	15th	1st	15th	1st	15th
Sunrise	7:34 AM	7:32 AM	7:22 AM	7:07 AM	6:25 AM	7:25 AM	6:58 AM	6:37 AM	6:16 AM	6:01 AM	5:51 AM	5:48 AM
Sunset	5:03 PM	5:16 PM	5:35 PM	5:52 PM	6:22 PM	7:22 PM	7:39 PM	7:53 PM	8:08 PM	8:21 PM	8:35 PM	8:42 PM

	July		August		September		October		November		December	
	1st	15th	1st	15th	1st	15th	1st	15th	1st	15th	1st	15th
Sunrise	5:53 AM	6:02 AM	6:16 AM	6:29 AM	6:44 AM	6:57 AM	7:11 AM	7:25 AM	7:43 AM	6:58 AM	7:15 AM	7:27 AM
Sunset	8:44 PM	8:39 PM	8:26 PM	8:09 PM	7:44 PM	7:22 PM	6:57 PM	6:35 PM	6:13 PM	5:00 PM	4:53 PM	4:53 PM

Weather & Climate

The wide variety of terrain, elevation, and precipitation patterns in Colorado National Monument results in a fairly diverse climate. With elevations ranging from 4,500 feet to over 7,000 feet, the Monument's weather represents desert, semi-desert, and upland climates. Spring temperatures are generally mild with daytime highs in the mid-60s. During the summer months, temperatures range between the mid-80s and 90s and often reach 100+ degrees in the inner canyons.

Winter temperatures are generally mild, from 20° to 45°, with lows occasionally dropping to zero. Winter is a great time to experience inversion layers of fog when monoliths peek above the fog. Annual precipitation averages 11 inches. August – October is usually the wettest period, but there is often a peak in March too.

Climate Information

	Average High Temperature		Average Low Temperature		Average Precipitation	
	F	C	F	C	IN	CM
January	36.8	2.7	16.6	-8.6	0.6	1.5
February	45.8	7.7	23.6	-4.7	0.5	1.3
March	56.5	13.6	32.0	0	1.0	2.5
April	65.4	18.5	38.7	3.7	0.9	2.3
May	75.7	24.2	47.7	8.7	1.0	2.5
June	88.1	31.2	57.0	13.9	0.4	1.0
July	93.2	34	63.6	17.6	0.7	1.8
August	90.4	32.4	62.2	16.8	0.8	2.0
September	81.0	27.2	53.0	11.7	0.9	2.3
October	67.3	19.6	40.9	4.9	1.0	2.5
November	50.3	10.2	28.2	-2.1	0.7	1.8
December	39.1	10.2	18.9	-7.3	0.5	1.3

Join us in Preserving our National Treasure



Colorado National Monument Association (CNMA), a nonprofit organization, exists solely to assist and support the Colorado National Monument. Proceeds from our retail operations, memberships, and donations, support the Monument's educational, interpretive, and scientific programs, helping visitors better understand and connect to this premier geologic and recreational gem in Western Colorado.

Annual Membership Fees:

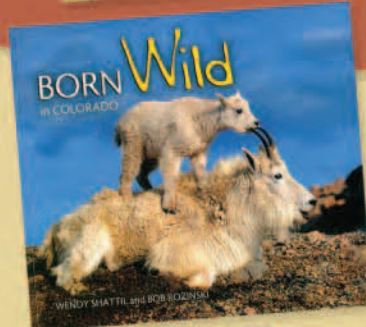
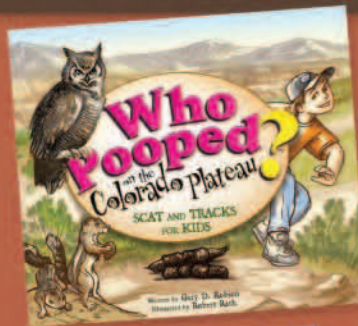
Individual \$30
Family \$45
Community Partner \$100

As a Member, you receive:

- 15% discount at the CNMA store and online
- Reciprocal discounts at participating association park stores
- Monthly E-newsletter
- Advance notice of special events

To Join: www.coloradonma.org
Or call (970) 858-3617, ext. 308

Your purchase supports educational programs at Colorado National Monument



At the CNMA Store for kids and adults...

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <i>water bottles</i> | <i>maps</i> | <i>books</i> |
| <i>kids' clothing</i> | <i>t-shirts</i> | <i>visors</i> |
| <i>CDs & DVDs</i> | <i>hats</i> | <i>games</i> |
| <i>calendars</i> | <i>toys</i> | <i>& more</i> |
| <i>cuddly animals</i> | <i>totes</i> | |



or shop online: www.coloradonma.org