



# Browns Canyon National Monument

Co-managed by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management

## Questions and Answers

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### At a Glance:

- In central Colorado’s upper Arkansas River Valley near Salida
- 21,586 acres (Bureau of Land Management: 9,750 acres; U.S. Forest Service: 11,836 acres)
- Co-managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management

### What is a national monument designation and how is it established?

National monument is a designation given to an area of Federal land similar to a national forest or a national park. National monuments encompass landscapes and objects of beauty, diversity, and historical and scientific interest.

With the addition of Browns Canyon, there are 111 national monuments across the country managed by Federal land management agencies, including the Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the President authority to designate national monuments.

The Browns Canyon National Monument is the 9th monument managed by the Forest Service and the 21st managed by the BLM.

### Who supports the designation of Browns Canyon as a monument?

The President’s proclamation fulfills a decades-long drive from the community to protect this spectacular area. Legislation to recognize Browns Canyon was first introduced in 2005 by Representative Joel Hefley and Senator Wayne Allard.

More than 500 people participated in a December 2014 public meeting hosted by Senator Mark Udall

and Senator Michael Bennet in Salida, Colorado. An overwhelming majority of speakers—including sportsmen and women, guides and outfitters, and local residents— supported increased protection and recognition for the area.

### What is unique about the Browns Canyon area?

Browns Canyon is celebrated for its abundant wildlife habitat, sweeping views of the Arkansas River Valley, and four-season recreational opportunities to explore the outdoors and experience the area’s scenery and solitude.



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Browns Canyon provides clean water, critical habitat for wildlife, outdoor recreational opportunities, and also maintains a working landscape for ranchers and for other existing multiple uses.

Browns Canyon is rich in cultural resources and has served as a transportation and hunting and gathering corridor for thousands of years by ancestors of the Eastern Shoshone, Ute, Apache, and Comanche Indians. The monument includes at least 18 known archeological sites including 5 prehistoric open lithic sites that are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The canyon has many distinctive geologic features, some of which fueled the area's mining booms in the 1800s. Portions of the monument include unique and ancient shell and invertebrate fossils.

The topography of Browns Canyon ranges from 7,300–10,000 feet in elevation, offering postcard perfect settings of Colorado's mid-elevation transition forest. As the elevation rises, a landscape with piñon juniper trees dominating along the river gives way to stands of Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine, and aspen trees. Aspen Ridge, situated at 10,000 feet, offers glorious views of the 13,000 and 14,000-foot peaks of the Sawatch Range to the west.

Browns Canyon is one of the last remaining relatively undisturbed riparian ecosystems in Colorado, where visitors have the opportunity to experience wildlife, including elk and deer, mountain lions, black bears, bobcats, foxes, coyotes, and pine martens and raptors such as golden eagles, prairie falcons, and great horned owls. The area is a vital migration corridor for migratory bird species. Bighorn sheep reintroduced to the area currently flourish along the slopes above the Arkansas River and portions of Aspen Ridge. Several imperiled plant species are found in the monument and a stunning array of wildflowers bloom in the spring and summer.

### **What recreational opportunities does this area offer?**

World renowned whitewater draws rafters and boating enthusiasts to test their skill on the rapids, eddies, and holes of the Arkansas River. Browns Canyon is the busiest stretch of the river, totaling more than 90,000 user-days annually, according to figures compiled by the BLM.





Browns Canyon offers off-road vehicle, hiking, and mountain biking trails leading to scenic vistas, as well as opportunities for big game archery, black powder, and rifle hunting.

Browns Canyon is part of the larger Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, which is cooperatively managed across land ownerships by the BLM, the Forest Service, and the State of Colorado. The monument designation does not effect any existing cooperative agreements or leases.

### **How will the two Federal agencies manage the monument together?**

The agencies will jointly prepare a management plan for the monument that will address the actions necessary to protect the resources identified in the proclamation. The plan will be developed with maximum public involvement, including tribal, local and State governments, area ranchers and permit holders, and other interested stakeholders.

Monument management plans typically address many important priorities, including:

- Promoting cooperative conservation and management opportunities
- Enhancing recreational opportunities
- Managing invasive nonnative species
- Restoring fish and wildlife habitat and preserving migration corridors

### **Does the BLM or the Forest Service have experience managing national monuments together?**

Yes. The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management have shared management of the congressionally

legislated Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument in California since 2000.

### **Does the monument designation affect water rights?**

No. The monument does not alter or affect the valid existing water rights of any party, nor will it alter or affect agreements governing the management and administration of Arkansas River flows, including the Voluntary Flow Management Program or the Arkansas River Compact.

### **How will existing uses, including grazing, be affected by a national monument designation?**

Browns Canyon has sustained active grazing for generations and is an essential part of Forest Service and BLM land management practices. Grazing permit holders are valuable partners and the agencies will continue to focus on these long standing relationships.

Livestock grazing will continue under this designation, subject to the normal rangeland management procedures of the Forest Service and BLM.

### **Would the monument designation affect private property rights inside or outside of the proposed monument boundary?**

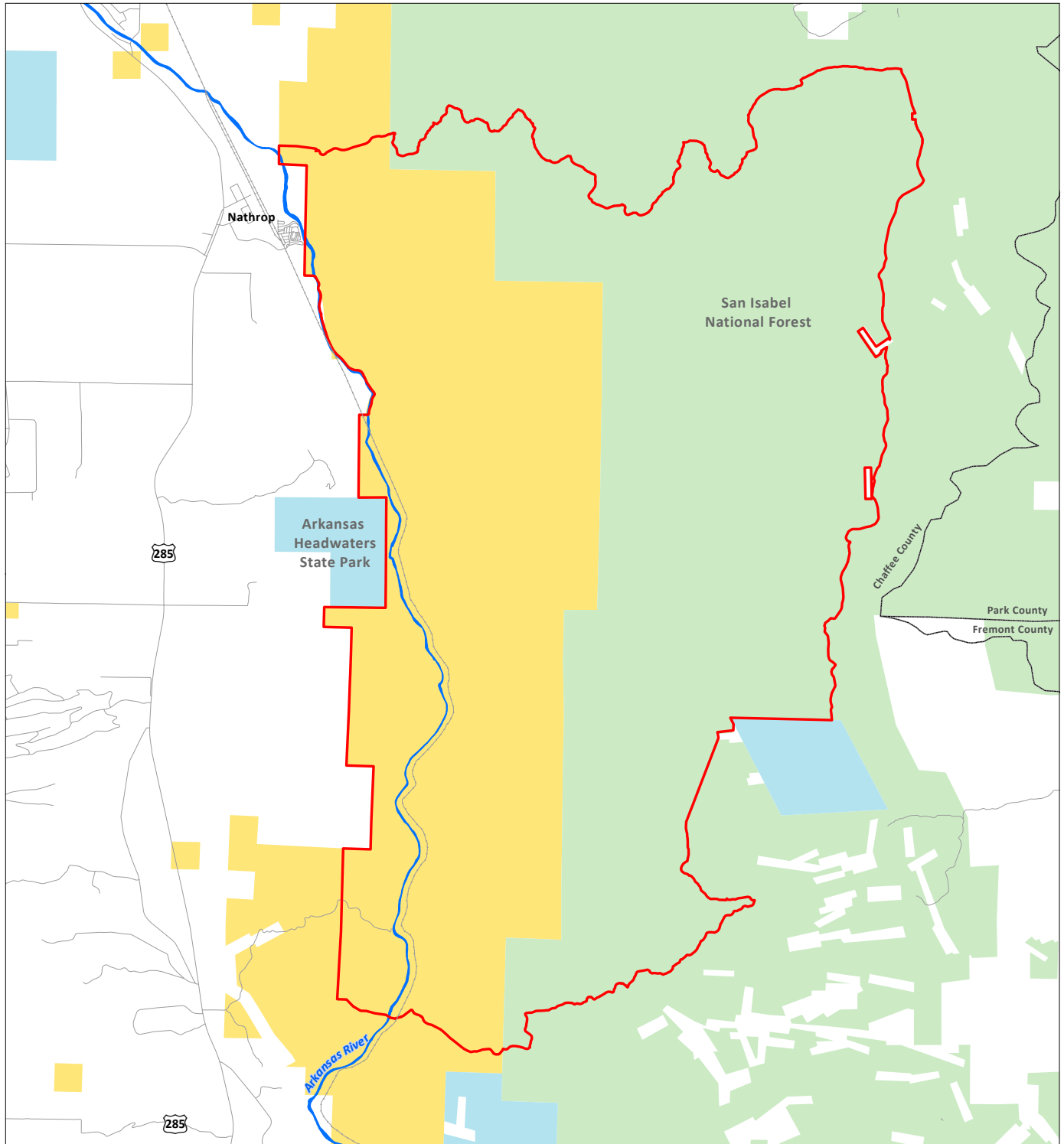
No. There are no private inholdings within the monument, and the monument will not impact the rights of abutting landowners to access their land.

### **How will the national monument designation affect visitors to the area?**

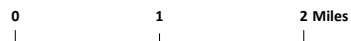
A monument designation enhances the visitor experience by allowing for coordinated management of the area, as well as that of recreation sites, access points, roads, and interpretive facilities.



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- State Lands



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