



# Canyonlands

## Planning Your Visit

CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK PRESERVES 337,598 ACRES OF COLORFUL canyons, mesas, buttes, fins, arches and spires in the heart of southeast Utah's high desert. Water and gravity have been the prime architects of this land, sculpting layers of sedimentary rock into the rugged landscape seen today.

The park is divided into four districts by the Green and Colorado rivers: the Island in the Sky, the Maze, the Needles, and the rivers themselves. While the districts share a primitive desert atmosphere, each retains its own character and offers different opportunities for exploration and the study of natural and cultural history.

The Island in the Sky is the most accessible district, offering expansive views from many overlooks along the paved scenic drive, several hikes of varying length and a popular four-wheel-drive road. The Needles District offers more of a backcountry experience, requiring some hiking or four-wheel driving to see the area's attractions. The Maze is a remote district requiring considerably more time and self-reliance to visit. Northwest of the Maze, the Horseshoe Canyon Unit is a day-use area with stunning Native American rock art panels. River trips offer another way to experience the park and usually involve two or more days of boating.

There are no roads within the park that directly link the four districts. Though they may appear close on a map, traveling between them requires two to six hours by car as there are few places to cross the Colorado and Green rivers. Most people find it impractical to visit more than one or two districts in a single trip.

The high desert climate of Canyonlands is characterized by very hot summers, mild weather in the spring and fall, and cold winters. Light snowfalls occur in winter, making many of the unpaved roads and even some hiking trails impassable. Spring weather is very unpredictable, with a significant amount of the year's precipitation falling in March and April. Violent thunderstorms arrive in July and August, sometimes causing impressive flash floods.

Most visits to Canyonlands involve primitive camping in sites along the trails, roads and rivers found here. Campgrounds and popular backcountry areas often fill every night from mid-March to Memorial Day and from Labor Day through mid-October. If you are planning to camp during these seasons, be prepared with a backup plan in case there is nothing available. Backcountry permits and group campsites may be reserved in advance, but regular sites in the campgrounds are first-come, first-served.



Whether day hiking at Grand View Point, mountain biking the White Rim Road or rafting the mighty Colorado River, Canyonlands offers something for everyone.



### FUN FOR KIDS

#### Junior Ranger Program

Free Junior Ranger booklets are available at park visitor centers. Filled with fun activities, these books reveal the wonders of Canyonlands to kids and parents alike. By completing a few exercises, participants earn a Junior Ranger badge and certificate.

#### Hiking & Exploring

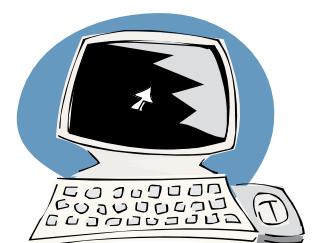
Both the Island in the Sky and the Needles districts have several short trails great for children. At the Island, kids enjoy peeking through Mesa Arch and climbing the back of the whale at Whale Rock. In the Needles, the Cave Spring Trail, featuring a cowboy camp and prehistoric pictographs, is always a hit. Pothole Point is another popular hike, especially when the potholes are full of water and the creatures that live in these small ecosystems. Be attentive when hiking with kids in Canyonlands, as there are unfenced overlooks throughout the park.

#### Discovery Packs

Both the Island in the Sky and Needles districts offer a unique tool for kids eager to explore and learn about the area: Discovery Packs. These packs contain many useful items, including binoculars, a hand lens, a naturalist guide and a notebook. Before you set out for the day, stop by the visitor center and check one out.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

### The Park at Your Fingertips



[www.nps.gov/cany](http://www.nps.gov/cany)

All the information in this trip planner, and a great deal more, is available on the Canyonlands National Park website.

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





National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

## Canyonlands Trip Planner

### Published By

Canyonlands Natural History Association, a not-for-profit organization that assists the National Park Service in its educational, interpretive and scientific programs. For more information, see the back page of this newspaper. (5m, 5/09)

### Park Mailing Address

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

### Phone

(435) 719-2313

### Email

canyinfo@nps.gov

### Website

www.nps.gov/cany

### Cover Photo

Hiking the Spanish Bottom Trail,  
Maze District

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

# General Information

## CAMPING

Canyonlands offers many camping opportunities. There are developed campgrounds in both the Needles and Island in the Sky districts. These campgrounds are located along the scenic drives and feature toilets, picnic tables and fire rings. Sites are first-come, first-served. Maximum RV length is 28 feet (in most sites). For visitors interested in backcountry camping, there are possibilities in every district. Information on backcountry trips is provided on the district pages and on page 4.

Outside the park, Dead Horse Point State Park is located on Utah Highway 313 near the Island in the Sky. Reservations may be made from 3 to 120 days in advance by calling Utah State Parks at (800) 322-3770.

Private campgrounds are located in nearby towns and just outside the Needles District. Contact county travel offices for details (see chart below).

Camping is also possible on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land outside the park. Some restrictions apply. Contact the nearest BLM office for more information.

## FEES

Fees are charged for park entrance, camping and backcountry permits. Eighty percent of the fees collected at Canyonlands are returned to the park to address priority needs in maintenance, infrastructure, resource management and visitor services. The following fees are in effect for Canyonlands:

- Entrance: \$10/vehicle, \$5/individual
- Interagency Annual Pass: \$80
- Local Annual Passport: \$25
- Developed Campgrounds:
  - Squaw Flat (Needles) - \$15/night
  - Willow Flat (Island in the Sky) - \$10/night
  - Group Sites (Needles) - \$3/person/night
- Backcountry Permits: see page 4

Entrance fee waivers are available to bonafide educational groups when the purpose of a visit relates directly to park resources. Submit requests to: National Park Service, Educational Fee Waivers, 2282 SW Resource Blvd., Moab, UT 84532, Fax: (435) 719-2300.

## RESERVATIONS

Canyonlands accepts reservations for overnight backcountry trips including backpacking, four-wheel-drive and river camping. Group campsites in the Needles District (11

### IF YOU HAVE SEVERAL DAYS

A visit of several days allows people to experience more fully the wonders of Canyonlands. Multi-day trips include mountain biking the White Rim Road, backpacking in the Needles, four-wheel-driving in the Maze, and boating the Colorado and Green Rivers. Visits to the Maze and the rivers typically include at least three nights.

### IF YOU HAVE A WEEK

Week-long backcountry trips are possible in every district. Most private river trips through Cataract Canyon require a week. Visitors can also use the Squaw and Willow Flat campgrounds as base camps for day trips throughout the Needles and Island in the Sky.

In addition to the ideas mentioned above, commercial outfitters offer a variety of guided excursions to Canyonlands. Trips vary in length from one day to a week or more. See the sidebar on page 7 for more information.



Shade structures in the Needles District provide excellent lunch spots.



Going over maps at the Hans Flat Ranger Station, gateway to the Maze District.

or more people required), and day use permits for Horse Canyon/Peekaboo and Lavender canyons may also be reserved. Reservations are not accepted for individual sites at Squaw and Willow Flat campgrounds. A reservation form is printed on the back page.

## FOOD, LODGING & OTHER SERVICES

Food, lodging and other amenities are not available in Canyonlands National Park. These may be found in nearby towns such as Moab and Monticello. Contact area travel councils (see below) for more information.

## INFORMATION CENTERS

Canyonlands maintains visitor centers in each district. Outside the park, Blanding (on Highway 191), Moab (at the corner of Center and Main Streets) and Monticello (in the Frontier Museum, corner of Highway 191 and 200 South) have information centers with knowledgeable staff, brochures and maps.

## INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

Evening programs, guided walks and overlook talks are offered April through October. Schedules are posted at visitor centers and campgrounds.

## TRANSPORTATION

Commercial airlines serve Grand Junction, CO and Salt Lake City. A small commuter airline serves Moab. Bus service is available to Green River (fifty miles from Moab) and Crescent Junction (thirty miles away). Taxi and shuttle services are available from both Salt Lake City and Grand Junction to Moab and other destinations in the area. Contact local travel offices for more information (see Phone and Internet Directory below). There is no public transportation to or within Canyonlands. Hitchhiking is not allowed in national parks. A list of commercial tour operators is available on our website.

## TRAVELING WITH PETS

Activities with pets are very limited at Canyonlands. Pets are not allowed on hiking trails, at overlooks or anywhere in the backcountry. Pets may not accompany groups traveling by four-wheel-drive vehicle, mountain bike or boat. Pets may accompany visitors in the developed campgrounds, and may be walked in the park along paved roads. Pets may also accompany visitors traversing the Potash/Shafter Canyon road between Moab and the Island in the Sky. Pets must be leashed at all times when outside a vehicle.

## HAVE A SAFE VISIT

- Drink at least one gallon of water per day if you're active in the desert.
- Always carry a map, adequate clothing and flashlight in the backcountry.
- Remain in one place if you become lost or separated from a group.
- Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Never cross a canyon that is flooding.
- During lightning storms, avoid lone trees and high ridges. Sit in a vehicle if possible.
- Be careful near cliff edges, especially when rock surfaces are wet or icy.
- Rabies, west Nile virus, plague and hantavirus occur in southeast Utah. Avoid close contact with wild animals.

## IMPORTANT REGULATIONS

- ATVs are not allowed in Canyonlands. All motorbikes must be street legal and operated by licensed drivers.
- Personal water craft are not allowed on the rivers within Canyonlands.
- Mountain bikes must remain on roads; they are not allowed on trails.
- Pets are not allowed in the backcountry, even in a vehicle (see above).
- Wood fires are not allowed in the backcountry, except along the river corridors where visitors must use a firepan and pack out all unburned debris.

## WEATHER

Canyonlands experiences wide temperature fluctuations, sometimes over 40 degrees in a single day. The temperate (and most popular) seasons are spring (April through May) and fall (mid-September through October), when daytime highs average 60 to 80 F and nighttime lows average 30 to 50 F. Summer temperatures often exceed 100 F, making strenuous exercise difficult. Late summer monsoon season brings violent storm cells which often cause flash floods. Winters (November through March) are cold, with highs averaging 30 to 50 F, and lows averaging 0 to 20 F.

## ACCESSIBILITY

At the Island in the Sky, visitors with mobility impairments can access the visitor center and restrooms, Buck Canyon Overlook, Green River Overlook and Grand View Point Overlook. In the Needles, the visitor center, restrooms, Squaw Flat Campground and Wooden Shoe Overlook are wheelchair accessible. Other points of interest are accessible with some assistance.

## Your First Visit to Canyonlands

No idea where to go? Here are some thoughts on planning your first visit to Canyonlands:

### IF YOU HAVE HALF A DAY

Driving to Canyonlands requires at least an hour from nearby towns, so even a brief visit (with little time outside the car) takes almost half a day. The Island in the Sky accommodates these quick trips, with lots of overlooks and several short (2 miles or less) trails that provide a great introduction to the park. Adventurous drivers can return to Moab via the Shafer Trail (high-clearance recommended).

### IF YOU HAVE A FULL DAY

With a full day to spare, visitors can choose between the Island in the Sky or Needles districts. Spending a day in either area allows time for in-depth exploration by foot, bike or four-wheel-drive vehicle. Horseshoe Canyon is another popular destination for day trips, though the trailhead is two hours by car from Moab.

### 2 Canyonlands Trip Planner

## Phone & Internet Directory

### Canyonlands National Park

General Information	(435) 719-2313	<a href="http://www.nps.gov/cany">http://www.nps.gov/cany</a>
Backcountry Reservations	(435) 259-4351	<a href="http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/reservations.htm">http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/reservations.htm</a>
Island in the Sky	(435) 259-4712	<a href="http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/islandinthesky.htm">http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/islandinthesky.htm</a>
Needles District	(435) 259-4711	<a href="http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/needles.htm">http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/needles.htm</a>
Maze District	(435) 259-2652	<a href="http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/maze.htm">http://www.nps.gov/cany/planyourvisit/maze.htm</a>

### Bureau of Land Management

Moab Area	(435) 259-2100	<a href="http://www.ut.blm.gov">http://www.ut.blm.gov</a>
Monticello Area	(435) 587-2141	
Hanksville Area	(435) 542-3461	

### Local Travel Information

Moab, Green River	(800) 635-6622	<a href="http://www.discovermoab.com">http://www.discovermoab.com</a>
Blanding, Monticello	(800) 574-4386	<a href="http://www.southeastutah.com">http://www.southeastutah.com</a>

### Bookstore

Canyonlands Natural History Association	(800) 840-8978	<a href="http://www.cnha.org">http://www.cnha.org</a>
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### River Flows

U.S. Geological Survey	(801) 539-1311	<a href="http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis">http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis</a>
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### Weather Forecast

U.S. Weather Service	(801) 524-5133	<a href="http://nimbo.wrh.noaa.gov">http://nimbo.wrh.noaa.gov</a>
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# Island in the Sky

THE ISLAND IN THE SKY MESA RESTS ON SHEER SANDSTONE CLIFFS OVER 1,000 feet above the surrounding terrain. Every overlook offers a different perspective on the park's spectacular landscape. The Island is the easiest district to visit in a short period of time, offering many pullouts with spectacular views along the paved scenic drive. Hiking trails and four-wheel-drive roads access backcountry areas for day or overnight trips.

## LOCATION

To reach the Island, take U.S. Highway 191 to Utah Highway 313 (10 mi/16 km north of Moab, or 22 mi/35 km south of I-70) and then drive southwest 22 mi/35 km. Driving time to the visitor center from Moab is roughly 40 minutes, or an hour to Grand View Point.

## VISITOR SERVICES

- Visitor center is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily (except some winter holidays), with extended hours spring through fall. Exhibits, publications, Discovery Packs (see front page) and information are available.
- Bottled water is sold at the visitor center. Water is not available elsewhere; bring all that you will need.
- Overlook talks and guided walks are led by rangers spring through fall. Check at the visitor center for times and locations.
- 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.

## SHORT TRAILS

Several short trails exist along the scenic drive at the Island. These include Grand View Point, Mesa Arch, Aztec Butte, Whale Rock and Upheaval Dome (first overlook). Each of these trails highlights some aspect of the park's natural or cultural history. Guides are available for some of the trails at trailheads and in the visitor center.

## LONG 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.

## 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's 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. Guidebooks for the White Rim are available through the bookstore (see back page).



## Rock 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.

Canyoneering (cross-country travel involving the occasional use of climbing equipment) may occur in areas closed to rock climbing, but must occur at least 300 feet away from cultural sites.

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.

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

- No new climbing 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).



A short walk leads to Mesa Arch.



Interpretive program at Grand View Point.



Watch for Big Horn Sheep on the talus slopes.

## Canyonlands Hiking Trails

Many different trip itineraries are possible in each district. Some of the most popular trails for backpacking and day hiking are listed here.

### The Island in the Sky

#### Lathrop Canyon

Length: 22mi/35km 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. Three at-large permits are available for camping below the White Rim Road.

#### Murphy Loop

Length: 11mi/17.7km 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.

#### Syncline Loop

Length: 8mi/13km 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 1,300 feet. Trail climbs 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: 21mi/35km 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.

### The Maze

#### North Trail Canyon

Length: 12mi/20km to Maze Overlook  
Start: North Trail Trailhead  
This trail is the primary access to the Maze for visitors without a four-wheel-drive vehicle. The trail drops 1,000 feet as it descends from the Orange Cliffs mesa to Elaterite Basin. Until it reaches the main wash of North Trail Canyon, the route traverses steep, rocky terrain and is difficult to follow. At-large backpacking only.

### The Needles

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

# Backcountry Trips

MUCH OF CANYONLANDS IS MANAGED FOR ITS primitive character, and the park has become a popular destination for backcountry travel. Hundreds of miles of primitive trails and roads wind through the park's backcountry. 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. Visitors using the designated vehicle camps may stay a maximum of three consecutive nights at a camping area before having to relocate.

## OBTAINING A PERMIT

Permits are issued seven days a week at district visitor centers to reservation holders and, on a space-available basis, to walk-ins. Walk-in permits are only available the day before or the day of a trip. Permits are issued up to one hour before the close of business each day. River permits are issued from the Reservation Office in Moab, which is open Monday through Friday.

## RESERVATIONS

- Reservations are not required. However, reservations are recommended for White Rim trips, Needles backpacking trips during spring and fall, and frontcountry group sites throughout the year. Campsites not reserved in advance are available on a first-come, first-served basis at visitor centers.
- Reservations must be made at least two weeks in advance of a trip.
- The earliest date to apply for a reservation varies by activity. See chart below for specific dates.
- Reservations must be made by mail or fax.
- Reservation holders must pick up their permit at the district visitor center where their trip originates. A reservation confirmation is not a permit.

## 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 campsites.

## 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.

## IMPORTANT REGULATIONS

- Pets are not allowed in the backcountry, even in a vehicle. Pets may accompany visitors in the campgrounds, and may be walked along paved roads. Pets must be leashed whenever outside a vehicle.
- Wood fires are not allowed in the backcountry, except along the river corridors where visitors must use a firepan and pack out all unburned debris.
- Overnight visitors to the Maze District and the rivers (excluding backpackers) must bring their own toilet systems. These must allow for the sanitary removal of human waste from the backcountry. Toilets may be purchased or rented in nearby towns.

## MINIMUM IMPACT CAMPING

All backcountry travelers should be mindful of their impact on the land and follow "Leave No Trace" principles. More information is available at district visitor centers and on the Web at [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org).

## WATCH YOUR STEP

Biological soil crust is a critical component of the high desert ecosystem and is the most common groundcover in Canyonlands and the surrounding area. Crusts are easily damaged by careless hikers, bikers and drivers. Always walk on marked trails or on other durable surfaces such as rock or in sandy washes. Keep bikes, horses and vehicles on designated roads at all times. Help us keep our public lands healthy!

## QUESTIONS?

Reservation Office staff are available by phone to answer questions and assist with trip planning Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (Mountain Time), at (435) 259-4351. When workload permits, phones may be answered until 4:00 p.m.



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

## Making a Reservation

A reservation form is included on the back page of this newspaper. Reservation requests must be submitted by mail or fax. To process a request, we need the following information:

### Trip Leader

Name, address, email and phone numbers for the individual making the reservation. Include estimated group size and number of vehicles/boats (these may be finalized later). See limits in adjacent chart.

### Type of Trip

Choose an activity from the list provided. Multiple activities may be combined on one permit providing group size limits are not exceeded and not more than one activity is chosen on a given day (e.g. if part of a river trip group wants to backpack for a night, they must be on a separate permit). 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. Flat water trips must indicate upstream travel arrangements.

### Itinerary

List the dates and campsites desired. Reservations must be made at least two weeks in advance of a trip. See chart opposite for earliest dates to apply. At least two itineraries should be developed in case your first choice is not available. River trips do not have to specify campsites, but must include launch and take-out locations. 4WD day use trips indicate either Horse or Lavender canyon.

### Payment

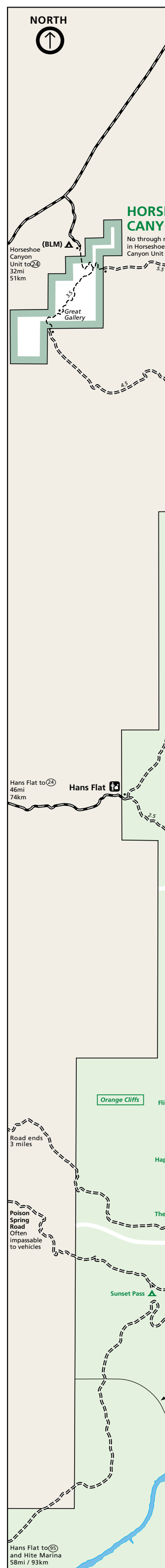
All applications must include a credit card number with expiration date (Visa or MasterCard only) or a check/money order made payable to the National Park Service. When multiple activities are reserved on one permit, only the higher fee is collected (e.g. Cataract Canyon trips include the flat water section). Reservation fees are non-refundable.

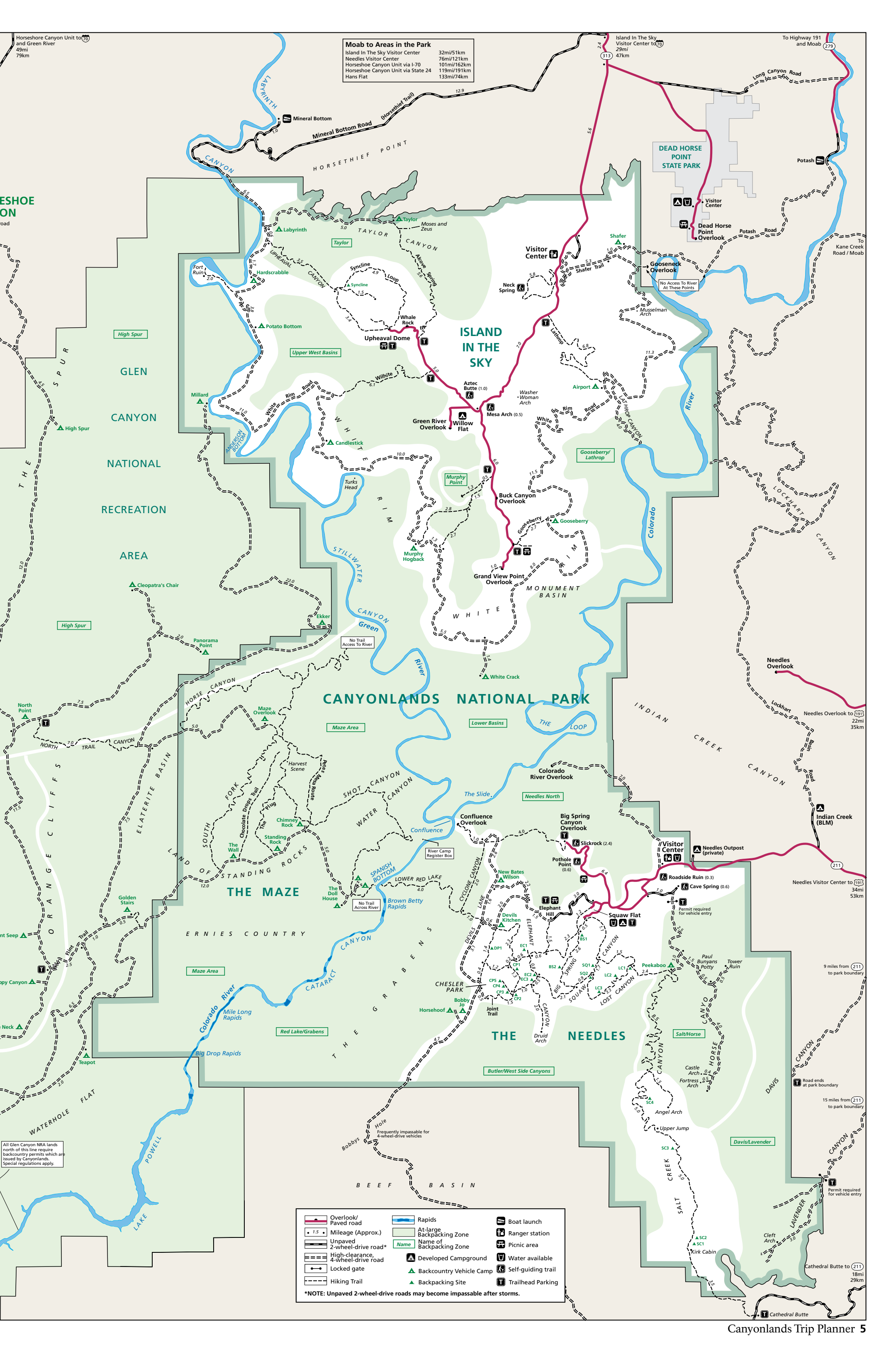
### Special Instructions

Use this area to provide other specifics or options for your trip (e.g. campsites you definitely want, preferred direction of travel on the White Rim Road, alternate dates, etc.). If you're visiting for the first time, please say so and reservation office staff will schedule the best trip possible based on availability. If questions arise about your application, we will try to contact you.

## Permit & Reservation Information

Activity (Fee)	Group Size Limit (per permit)	Earliest Date to Apply
<b>4WD Day Use (\$5)</b>	1 vehicle	<b>for trips during 2011</b> July 12, 2010
<b>Backpacking (\$15)</b>	Island in the Sky: 7 Needles: 7 Maze: 5	<b>for trips during 2012</b> July 11, 2011
<b>4WD/Mountain Bike (\$30)</b>	Island in the Sky: 15 (3 vehicles) Needles: 10 (3 vehicles) Maze: 9 (3 vehicles)	
<b>River Trips</b> Flat Water (\$20) Cataract Canyon (\$30)	40 40	<b>for trips during 2011</b> January 3, 2011
<b>Needles Group Sites (\$15)</b> (Does not include nightly fee)	Split Top: 15 (3 vehicles) Wooden Shoe: 25 (5 vehicles) Squaw Flat: 50 (10 vehicles)	<b>for trips during 2012</b> January 2, 2012





**Moab to Areas in the Park**

Island In The Sky Visitor Center	32mi/51km
Needles Visitor Center	76mi/121km
Horseshoe Canyon Unit via I-70	101mi/162km
Horseshoe Canyon Unit via State 24	119mi/191km
Hans Flat	133mi/74km

\*NOTE: Unpaved 2-wheel-drive roads may become impassable after storms.



## Pack & Saddle Stock Regulations

Pack and saddle stock are allowed on all backcountry roads and in Horseshoe Canyon. Permits are required for both day and overnight trips. Horses, mules and burros are the only animals permitted. Other domestic animals are prohibited in the backcountry. Stock must be fed pelletized feed for 48 hours in advance of and during a trip in order to prevent the spread of exotic plant species. Animals may not be left unattended and must be staked at least 300 feet away from water sources and away from vegetation where possible. Grazing is not allowed.

### Day Use

Day use permits are unlimited and free, except in Horse Canyon/Peekaboo and Lavender Canyon in the Needles, where use is limited to seven animals per day and a \$5 fee is charged. In other areas of the park, including Horseshoe Canyon, individual groups may not exceed ten animals and ten people. Contact the reservation office or district ranger stations to obtain day use permits.

### Overnight Use

Overnight trips must stay at designated vehicle camps. Permits (\$30 fee) are available at district ranger stations and may be reserved in advance (see page 4). All manure and feed must be packed out from the campsites. The group size limit for overnight use 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.

# 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 vehicles or become impassable when it snows or rains heavily.

### 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 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, ap-



The road to the Land of Standing Rocks can be tough on vehicles.

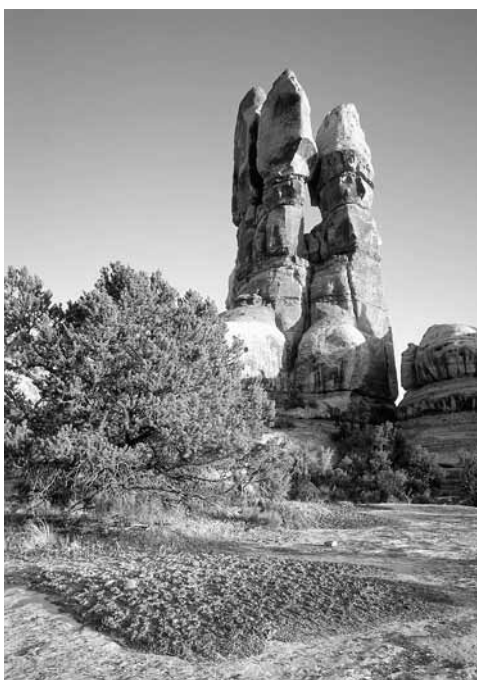
proximately 2.5 miles southeast of the Hans Flat Ranger Station, and hike 12 miles to the Maze Overlook. Depending on the vehicle, hikers may also be able to negotiate the 14 mile road to park at the top of the Flint Trail switchbacks.

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. 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 considered by many to be 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.



Spires of Cedar Mesa Sandstone



Backpackers have many trails to choose from in the Needles District.



Part of the Peekaboo rock art panel in Salt Creek Canyon, a popular destination for Needles visitors.

# The Needles

THE NEEDLES DISTRICT FORMS THE SOUTHEAST corner of Canyonlands and was named for the colorful spires of Cedar Mesa Sandstone that dominate the area. The district's extensive trail system provides many opportunities for long day hikes and overnight trips. Foot trails and four-wheel-drive roads lead to such features as Tower Ruin, Confluence Overlook, Elephant Hill, the Joint Trail, and Chesler Park.

### LOCATION

On U.S. Highway 191, drive 40 miles (60 km) south of Moab or 14 miles (22 km) north of Monticello, then take Utah Highway 211 roughly 35 miles (56 km) west. Highway 211 ends in the Needles, and is the only paved road leading in and out of the district.

### VISITOR SERVICES

- Visitor center is open year-round from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (except some winter holidays), with extended hours March through October. Exhibits, information and publications are available.
- Interpretive programs are offered from March through October with evening programs presented most nights in the Squaw Flat Campground. Check at the visitor center and on bulletin boards for subjects and times. Other programs are offered throughout the season.
- 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.
- Three group sites are available by reservation (page 4). A minimum of 11 people is necessary to occupy a group campsite.

- Permits for backpacking, four-wheel-drive day use, and four-wheel-drive camping are available at the visitor center on a limited basis. Advanced reservations are recommended (see page 4). Permits must be picked up at least one hour before the visitor center closes.

### SHORT HIKES

There are four short, self-guided trails along the scenic drive. These trails are mostly level except for Cave Spring which has two ladders. Each trail highlights different aspects of the park's natural and cultural history. Trail guides are available at the visitor center and at the trailheads.

### 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 on page 3.

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. A detailed trail guide may be purchased from the bookstore (page 8).

### 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.

Popular four-wheel-drive roads include Elephant Hill, Colorado Overlook Road, Horse Canyon and Lavender Canyon. 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 Rivers

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. River flows are dependent upon snowmelt, and the character of both rivers changes dramatically depending on the season. High water periods generally stretch from early May to late June. Past and present river flows are available from the US Geological Survey (see Phone and Internet Directory on page 2).

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 presents 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. As a rule, groups can plan on covering 15 to 20 miles per day during high water, or 10 to 15 miles per day during low water, depending on the amount of time spent hiking or how much you paddle.

## PERMITS

Permits are required for all overnight river trips in Canyonlands, and for one-day Cataract trips (fee charged). River permits are issued (usually by mail) from the Reservation Office in Moab, and may be obtained anytime after the first business day of a given year for trips during that year. 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 4 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. See chart for mileage.

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. 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 Hite Marina on Lake Powell, which is roughly 30 miles from the last rapid. Conditions on Lake Powell have changed significantly in recent years due to drought. 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.



Cataract Canyon around Big Drop One.



Great Blue Heron



Dory on a calm stretch of the Colorado River

## 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 Geysers	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.

# Horseshoe Canyon

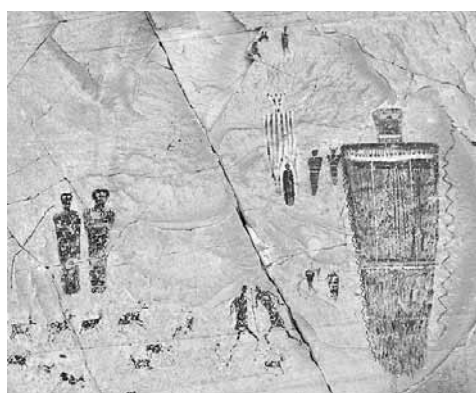
HORSESHOE CANYON WAS ADDED TO Canyonlands National Park in 1971. Its intriguing rock art is considered by many to be the most significant in North America. The Great Gallery, the best known and most spectacular panel in Horseshoe Canyon, includes well-preserved, life-sized figures with intricate designs. Other highlights include spring wildflowers, sheer sandstone walls and mature cottonwood groves.

## LOCATION

Horseshoe Canyon is 32 miles east of Utah Highway 24 via a two-wheel-drive, graded dirt road. There is also a graded dirt road to the canyon from the town of Green River. Area two-wheel-drive roads may become four-wheel-drive or even impassable when it snows or rains heavily.

## CAMPING & HIKING

At Horseshoe Canyon, visitors may camp at the west rim trailhead on public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management. A vault toilet is provided but



Horseshoe Canyon offers both intriguing, prehistoric rock art and spectacular canyon scenery.

there is no water. The hike to the Great Gallery is 7 miles round trip from the park boundary, descending 750 feet and requiring about six hours. The canyon is limited to day use within the park boundary. Group size is limited to 20 people. Pets are prohibited.

## HORSEBACK RIDING

Horseshoe Canyon is one of the more popular destinations for horseback riding in Canyonlands. See opposite page for regulations.



## INTERPRETIVE ACTIVITIES

Rangers lead guided hikes in Horseshoe Canyon when staff are available. Contact the Hans Flat Ranger Station at (435) 259-2652 for current schedules. Special walks for educational or other large groups may also be planned by contacting Hans Flat. Walks usually depart the west rim parking lot at 9 a.m.



## 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, call the General Information number on page 2 or visit our Website which includes links to many of the outfitters' Websites.

