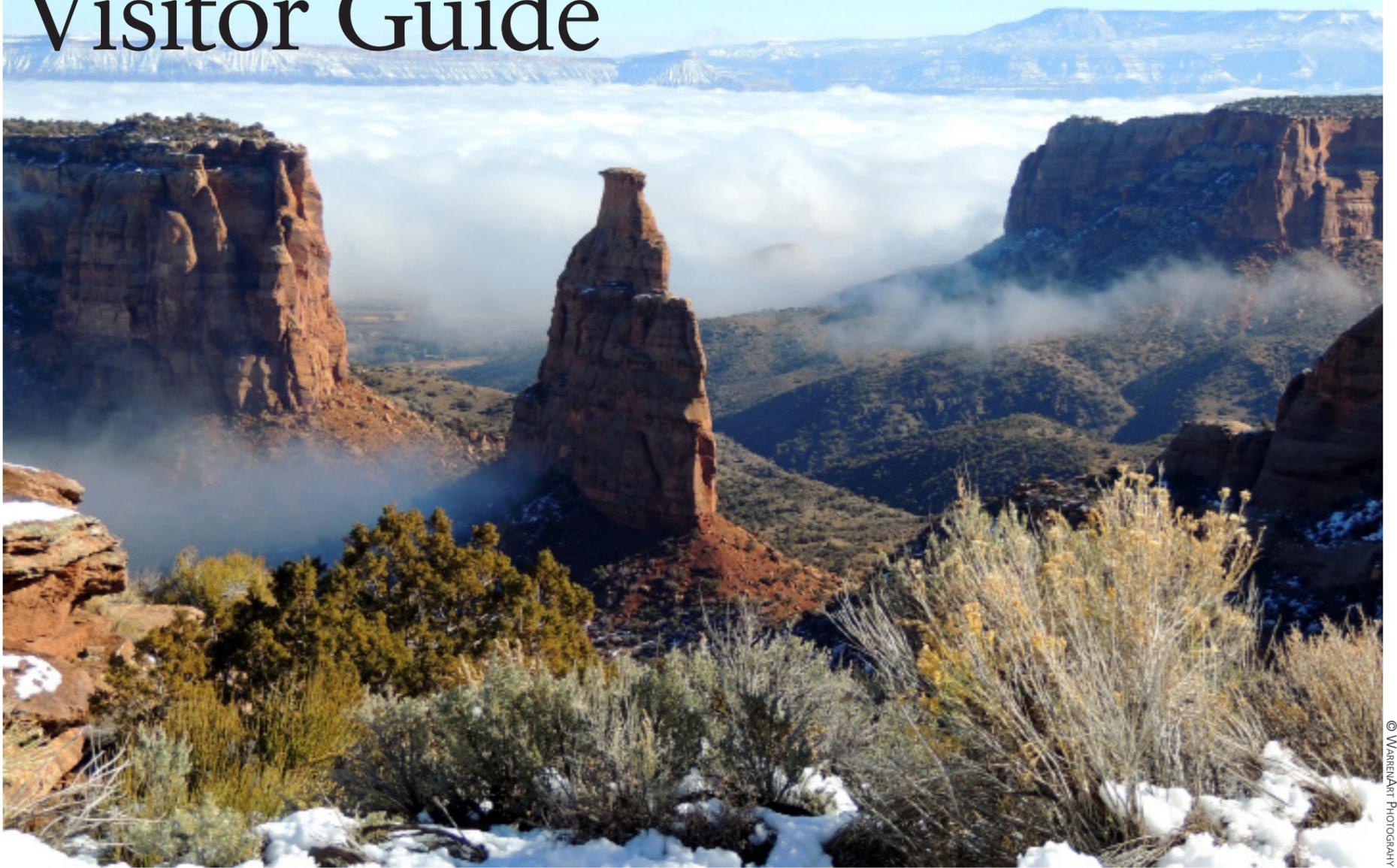




Visitor Guide



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Plan Your Visit

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU HAVE DISCOVERED ONE OF THE GREAT WONDERS OF THE WEST. COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT, ESTABLISHED IN 1911 AS THE 25TH UNIT IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, LIES ON THE EASTERN EDGE OF THE COLORADO PLATEAU AND CONTAINS THE BREATHTAKING CANYONS THAT MAKE THIS REGION UNIQUE. WINTER, SPRING, SUMMER OR FALL - WHICHEVER SEASON YOU ARE VISITING, DISCOVERING THE MONUMENT WAS HALF THE FUN. NOW LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN!

GO FOR A DRIVE

Explore the historic Rim Rock Drive and enjoy steep canyon walls, towering monoliths and balanced rocks along the way. As the name implies, this 23-mile road travels along the rims of the park's major canyons. The entire drive through the park takes at least an hour. There are 19 overlooks with interpretive signs, so make sure you budget time to stop and take in the views. Some of the most popular overlooks are Cold Shivers Point, Ute Canyon View, Grand View, Independence Monument Overlook and Book Cliffs View. See pages 2 and 3 for road safety tips and a list of accessible overlooks.

STOP BY THE VISITOR CENTER

Just four miles from the West (Fruita) Entrance, the visitor center is a great place to start your adventure. Learn more about the park's geology, ecology and human history through interactive exhibits and a park video. Shop for monument merchandise,

field guides, t-shirts and more in the bookstore. See page 3 for a detailed map and suggested activities in and around the visitor center.

TAKE A HIKE

Whether you are an experienced or a first-time hiker, you'll have no problem finding a suitable trail here. The park's 45 miles of trails range from short walks to all-day treks through rugged canyons. See pages 4 and 5 for a map and detailed hiking information.

RIDE YOUR BIKE

Experienced riders should try the grand loop, a challenging 33-mile ride across Rim Rock Drive and back along county roads. Looking for an easier ride? Start at the visitor center or Cold Shivers Point and ride across the top of Rim Rock Drive. See page 4 for more information on cycling.

SLEEP UNDER THE STARS

Spend the night in the frontcountry at Saddlehorn Campground or among

red rocks on a backpacking trip.

The Saddlehorn Campground offers first-come, first-served sites as well as reservable sites (March-October). All sites have a camping fee of \$20/night. Free permits are required for backcountry camping. Check page 3 for more camping information.

EARN YOUR BADGE

Children of all ages can become official Junior Rangers. Grab a free activity guide at the visitor center or entrance station and learn how you can help protect the park as you explore. More about Junior Rangers can be found on page 7.

JOIN A RANGER

Learn about the monument by joining a ranger-guided walk, interpretive talk, or evening activity. See page 3 for more information on ranger-led programs.

No matter which season you visit or what you choose to do, we hope this visit is a memory that will last a lifetime.

Hello, and welcome to Colorado National Monument! Our red rock refuge is a surprise to first-time visitors and you will be in awe as you travel along historic Rim Rock Drive, step back in time along a hike, or gaze upwards to see the night's ribbon of stars spilling across the sky. This Visitor Guide is the perfect way to get started, as is a stop at our Saddlehorn Visitor Center.

The National Park Service (NPS) has 401 different units to its system. Throughout your travels and support of national park areas, you may have noticed that our units have various "last names" including park, monument, or recreation area to list a few. No matter our name, we each contribute to the national significance of what makes our country unique.

The "monument," the local area nickname, is the daily backdrop to our park neighbors and local residents; it was the ultimate focus of "founder" John Otto more than a century ago. Labeled odd and eccentric, Otto blazed trails and camped in the canyons; he promoted the idea to set these lands aside as a national park. That was all in a day's work for this visionary. Read the article on page 2 to see what we do today, and think about where you can make a difference in protecting your public lands for the future.

Thank you for visiting us!

Lisa Eckert
Lisa Eckert
Superintendent



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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Colorado National Monument Visitor Guide

Published By

Colorado National Monument Association, a non-profit organization that supports interpretive and educational programs at Colorado National Monument

Mailing Address

Colorado National Monument
1750 Rim Rock Drive
Fruita, CO 81521

E-mail

COLM_Info@nps.gov

Phone

970-858-3617 ext. 360

Fax Number

970-858-0372

Website and Social Media

www.nps.gov/colm
www.facebook.com/ColoradoNM

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

All in a Day's Work

NICK MYERS - PARK RANGER



Ranger-led Program

THROUGHOUT THIS VISITOR GUIDE YOU WILL read about some of the duties of the National Park Service (NPS) at Colorado National Monument. In every action we take, the NPS Organic Act of 1916 is our guide: “. . .to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” The employees of the NPS strive to meet that mission. As you will see, it's *all in a day's work*.

Changing Times

Being a park ranger in the early days of the NPS was in many ways different than today. The book *Oh Ranger!* chronicled a day in the life of a 1930s park ranger. The ranger had duties that included everything from chasing criminals to fighting a forest fire and, at the end of the day, walking nine miles to get home! The ranger ended his report by saying “*all in a day's work*.” Today, the effort that keeps this landscape of natural and cultural treasures protected is a complex combination of research, resource management, maintenance and public involvement. Let's see what goes into a day's work at Colorado National Monument.

Fee Collection

The first point of contact for most visitors to the monument is the welcoming ranger working at the entrance station. These rangers distribute information to visitors and collect fees, which are an essential part of the preservation and enjoyment of park resources. In 2013, fees paid by monument visitors funded an array of projects, including the repair of drainage structures along the shoulder of Rim Rock Drive, the hiring of a vegetation crew to remove invasive plant species park-wide, and improvements to the Serpents Trail. Much of the *day's work* of the monument would not be possible without visitor support through entrance fees and the rangers collecting them.

Science and Resource Stewardship

Part of protecting the park is knowing the relationship between the natural and cultural features found here. Resource experts such as archeologists, paleontologists, biologists, botanists, and historians conduct on-site research and baseline surveys to monitor and maintain desirable conditions. They provide in-depth analysis of data that directs conservation and management efforts within parks. A *day's work* for these scientists includes everything from bighorn sheep population counts, archive management, archeological and paleontological site surveys, invasive plant control, and native plant restoration.

Park Superintendent and Administration

Effective management fosters creativity, focuses on results, and requires accountability at all levels. The Superintendent works with local stakeholders, steers the course and sets the vision for all park programs. *All in a day's work* means providing daily support behind the scenes and as the face of the monument to the public.

Interpretation and Education

Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection. This has long been the mantra of interpretation and education in parks. Rangers help visitors learn about and interpret the meaning of the resources found here. To do this, they present education programs both in the park and in the classroom, answer questions at the visitor center, lead walks and present talks that tell the monument's stories. Nowadays, *all in a day's work* for education and interpretation rangers also means posting stories and photos on the monument's Facebook page and website and responding to visitor email requests for information.

Maintenance

All in a day's work for the maintenance team includes repairing road structures and maintaining historic buildings and trails. Built primarily by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s, Rim Rock Drive and many of the monument's historic rock buildings are now on the National Register of Historic Places. Skilled tradesmen use careful attention to detail to maintain this cultural architecture. The trail crew protects and improves historic routes pioneered by John Otto nearly a century ago. All this while ensuring restrooms are clean, lights and water systems work properly and the roads are cleared after snowstorms and rockfalls.

Visitor and Resource Protection

Protecting people from the park and the park from the people – that is the *day's work* of a protection ranger. When parks and monuments are established, regulations made by Congress ensure the resources (wildlife, geology, history) will be protected. Rangers enforce these regulations to ensure that park resources are left “unimpaired” for those who come after us. Protection rangers patrol Rim Rock Drive, picnic areas, hiking trails, and the campground and are constantly on call to respond to search and rescues. They maintain a good working relationship with the local police and fire departments to assist in responding to traffic accidents, law enforcement issues, fires or medical emergencies and ensure that visitors and staff have a safe place to work and enjoy.

Making the Monument Stronger

The employees of the monument work as a team to accomplish the mission of protection and enjoyment. But we cannot do it alone. Since the days of John Otto and the Civilian Conservation Corps, the monument has had a strong relationship with local communities and visitors from all around the world. By being involved, visiting the monument and supporting national park sites, we all contribute, we are all part of the National Park Service mission, we are all a part of the team. Whether it's a day on your bike, hiking the trails, or viewing the canyons from the Grand Valley, it's *all in a day's work*, helping us ensure the future protection of this storied landscape. Thank you for your support!

Rim Rock Drive

The 23-mile Rim Rock Drive is one of the grandest scenic drives in the American West. Hairpin turns, steep grades and unstable rock formations can make this historic road challenging. Use caution while you drive or ride your bicycle, and always share the road.

Staying Safe while you Drive

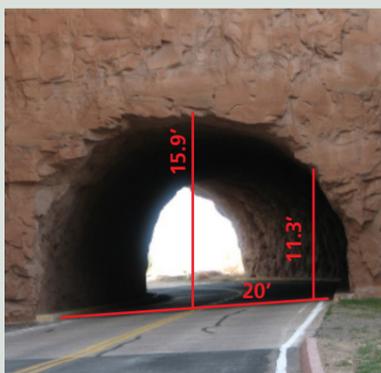
- Obey all posted speed limits.
- Watch for rocks in the road. Never attempt to move rocks or boulders. To report rocks in the road, call a park ranger at 970-858-3617 ext. 360.
- Watch for bicyclists and wildlife.
- When passing a bicyclist, allow at least three feet of clearance.

Tunnel Safety

Rim Rock Drive has three tunnels that were blasted and shaped in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). You will pass through two short (less than 250 feet in length), curved tunnels on the west side and one long (530 feet in length), straight tunnel on the east side.

- Lights are required in the tunnels.
- Watch out for bicyclists.
- Do not pass vehicles or bicyclists.
- No pedestrians in or around the tunnels.

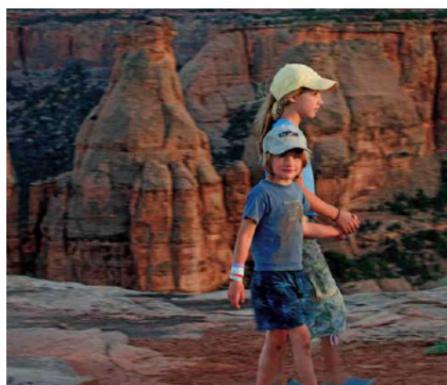
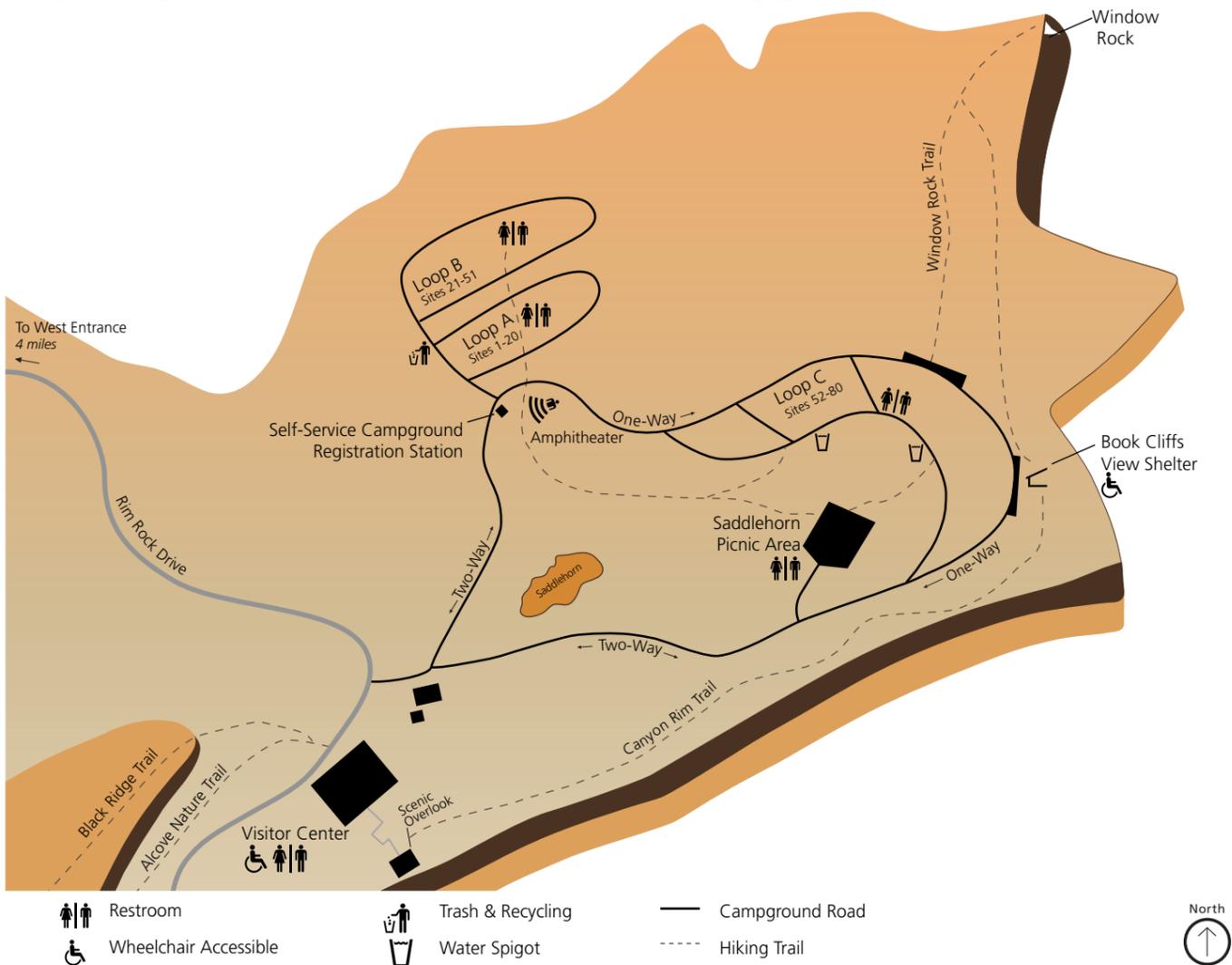
Tunnel Clearance



Maintaining Historic Resources

Saddlehorn Area

Exploring around the Visitor Center and Campground



Learn...

EXHIBITS & VIDEOS

Get an introduction to the geology, ecology and history of the monument at the visitor center. You can tour hands-on exhibits or watch a 12-minute introductory video.

RANGER PROGRAMS

Learn more about the forces that shaped the canyons, the animals that roam here or the colorful human history on a ranger-led walk, talk, or evening program. Schedules and program details available at the visitor center or online www.nps.gov/colm.

VISITOR CENTER STORE

The Colorado National Monument Association store at the visitor center has everything from guide books to t-shirts. All profits benefit the park.

Hike...

CANYON RIM TRAIL

You will enjoy amazing views of the park's famous monoliths (rock towers) on this easy hike. Start behind the visitor center and follow the rim of Wedding Canyon (0.5 mile one-way to the Book Cliffs View Shelter, easy).

ALCOVE NATURE TRAIL

Discover the wonders of the pinyon-juniper forest on this self-guided nature trail that leads to a small slot canyon (0.5 mile one-way, easy).

WINDOW ROCK TRAIL

Start at the Window Rock Trailhead on the Campground Loop Road or the Book Cliffs View Shelter and walk down to an overlook of Window Rock (0.25 mile one-way, easy).

Camp...

SADDLEHORN CAMPGROUND

Camp in this 80-site campground located near the visitor center. Sites in Loops A & C are first-come, first-served. Register at the self-service kiosk at the campground entrance. Sites in Loop B can be reserved at www.recreation.gov (March-Oct).

- Camping fee is \$20/night per site.
- Two cars, three tents and seven people are allowed at each site.
- Restrooms have flush toilets and potable water.
- RV length limit: 40'
- There are no electric hookups, showers or dump stations.
- No wood fires. Charcoal only.

BACKCOUNTRY CAMPING

Permits are required. Obtain a free backcountry camping permit at the visitor center.

Where can I...

...walk my dog?

On paved roads and in the campground. Please keep your pet on a leash at all times. Never leave pets in your car; high temperatures in an enclosed vehicle are dangerous. Stop by the visitor center for a map of pet-friendly trails outside the park.

...find a restroom?

Restrooms are available on the east side of the monument at Devils Kitchen Picnic Area, and on the west side at the visitor center and Saddlehorn Campground and Saddlehorn Picnic Area.

...have a picnic?

There are three picnic areas in the park: Devils Kitchen, Saddlehorn and the visitor center. Devils Kitchen and the visitor center have shade shelters.

...fill my water bottles?

Drinking water is available in all picnic areas, the campground and visitor center.

...ride my bicycle?

Bicycles are allowed on paved roads only. Biking is not permitted on any park trails.

Accessibility

We are striving to make your visit more enjoyable by ensuring facilities are as accessible as possible.

Picnic Areas

The visitor center and Devils Kitchen Picnic Area have accessible picnic tables.

Restrooms

The campground, visitor center and picnic areas have accessible restrooms.

Overlooks

Independence Monument View, Cold Shivers Point, Book Cliffs View are all accessible.

Programs & Exhibits

All interpretive exhibits, auditorium programs, bookstore, and interpretive talks at overlooks, are fully accessible. Audio descriptions are available for the exhibits. The park video is T-coil compatible and headsets are available.

Entrance Fees

- Private, non-commercial vehicle \$10
 - Individual (hiker, bicycle, motorcycle) \$5
- Both are good for seven consecutive days

Annual & Lifetime Passes

- Colorado NM Annual Pass - \$25
- Interagency Annual Pass - \$80
- Interagency Annual Pass for Active Duty Military & their Dependents - Free - (Must show military ID)
- Interagency Senior Pass (US citizens and permanent residents 62 and older) - \$10 for Lifetime Pass
- Interagency Access Pass (US citizens and permanent residents with a permanent disability) - Free for Lifetime Pass

Your Fee Dollars at Work

Did you know that your entrance and camping fees help improve the park? We use the fees collected here for trail repairs, facility improvements and visitor services. Thank you for supporting your national parks!

Visitor Center Hours

May - September	9am-6pm
October - November	9am-5pm
December - March	9am-4:30pm
April	9am-5pm
Closed December 25 th	

2014 Fee Free Days

- National Park Weekend April 19-20
- National Park Service Birthday August 25
- National Public Lands Day September 27
- Veterans Day November 11

Your Fee Dollars at Work

User Fee Projects Completed in 2013

- Repairing drainage structures along shoulder of Rim Rock Drive
- Park-wide invasive plant removal
- Serpents Trail improvements

Be Safe Out There

On the trail...

- There is no drinking water in the canyons. The park does not sell bottled water. Be prepared with extra water. Fill your bottles at picnic areas, the visitor center or in the campground.

- Be aware of cliffs. Watch your step and your children at overlooks and cliff edges.

- Protect your skin. Always wear a hat and sunscreen.

- Tell someone where you are going and when you will return. If you become lost, stay in one place and call for help.

- Watch where you put your feet and hands. You share the park with scorpions and rattlesnakes.

- Pay attention to rapidly changing weather. Avoid ridge tops and open areas during lightning storms.

- Be ready for biting gnats May–August. Bring insect repellent.

- Black bears and mountain lions live in and around the park. They are occasionally encountered on trails. Always be aware of their presence here, keep children close and secure your food. Perhaps you will be lucky enough to spot one of these elusive animals.

On your bike...

- You may ride your bicycle **ONLY** on roads (not on trails).

- 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.

- You may encounter large trucks for the first four miles from the east entrance.

- You must have lights for the tunnels. Front - white light visible from 500 feet
Back - red light visible from 200 feet

- **In case of emergency call 911.**

Where to Hike



Bighorn Sheep in Monument Canyon



Inside Devils Kitchen



Liberty Cap

Monument Canyon

LOWER MONUMENT CANYON TRAILHEAD

From the west entrance, turn right and drive 2.1 miles on Hwy 340. Turn right at the trailhead sign and follow the gravel driveway to the parking area.

LOWER MONUMENT CANYON TRAIL

For a moderate half-day hike, follow the Lower Monument Canyon Trail to the base of Independence Monument. Desert bighorn sheep also enjoy this sunny trail, so have your camera handy. (2.5 miles one-way, +500 feet, moderate)

MONUMENT AND WEDDING CANYON LOOP

Try this difficult loop for a more adventurous finish to the hike above. From Independence Monument, turn right (north) onto the less used Wedding Canyon Trail. The park does not maintain this trail. It will have rough sections (5 mile loop, +550 feet, moderate).

UPPER MONUMENT CANYON TRAILHEAD

From the visitor center turn left (east) and drive for 3.8 miles. The trailhead will be on your left.

UPPER MONUMENT CANYON TRAIL

You will descend 700 feet through steep switchbacks in the first 0.5 mile. Make sure you are prepared with enough water and proper footwear.

(3.5 miles to Independence Monument, -840 feet, 6 miles to Lower Monument Canyon Trailhead, -1,440 feet, difficult)

COKE OVENS TRAIL

Follow this easy trail down to an overlook of the Coke Ovens. (0.5 mile one-way, -100 feet, easy)

Devils Kitchen Area

DEVILS KITCHEN TRAILHEAD

From the east entrance drive 0.2 miles and turn left into the parking area.

SERPENTS TRAIL

Enjoy a good workout and amazing views on this well-graded trail. (1.75 miles one-way, +780 feet, moderate)

NO THOROUGHFARE CANYON TRAIL

This narrow canyon is a great place to spot collared lizards. Follow the wash for 1 mile to the first pool and turn around, or continue an additional 0.7 mile to the first waterfall. A rough route continues past the waterfall for 6.5 miles to the Upper Trailhead. (1-2 miles one-way, +100-600 feet, moderate)

DEVILS KITCHEN TRAIL

Look for cairns (rock piles) and carved steps as you ascend a large rock slope into this unique rock formation. (0.75 mile one-way, +300 feet, easy)

ECHO CANYON TRAIL

A spring keeps this lush canyon green throughout the summer. To reach Echo Canyon, follow Old Gordon Trail for 0.5 mile to a signed junction and turn left. (1.5 miles one-way, +300 feet, easy)

Short on time?

OTTO'S TRAIL

From the visitor center drive one mile east to the parking area on your left. Follow this level trail to an overlook of Monument and Wedding Canyons. (0.5 mile one-way, -50 feet, easy)

Corkscrew, Liberty Cap & Ute Canyon Trails

WILDWOOD TRAILHEAD

From the west (*Fruita*) entrance turn right and drive 6.5 miles on Hwy 340. Turn right at the light onto Redlands Parkway. Drive one mile and turn left onto Wildwood Drive. The gravel parking lot will be on your right.

CORKSCREW LOOP

Enjoy great views of the Ute Canyon waterfall on this historic trail. It's best to hike the loop in a counter-clockwise direction by going up the Liberty Cap Trail and down the Corkscrew Trail. (3.3 mile loop, +760 feet, moderate)

LIBERTY CAP TRAIL

Climb for 1.5 miles on this steep, rocky trail to reach the Liberty Cap rock formation, a large sandstone dome. (1.5 miles one-way, +1,100 feet, difficult)

UTE CANYON TRAILHEAD

From the visitor center, turn left onto Rim Rock Drive and drive 9.4 miles. The trailhead will be on your left.

UTE CANYON TRAIL

Ute Canyon offers a nice chance to explore the canyon bottom ecosystem. After the first 0.5 mile, the trail becomes rough and hard to follow. (4.5 miles one-way, -880 feet, difficult)

Protect Your Park

National parks are special places that preserve amazing natural and cultural resources. Thanks for helping protect the plants, animals, rocks and history in this park and other natural areas you visit.

- Leave No Trace. Please do not take anything from the park or leave anything behind. Even food scraps can take years to decompose in the desert.

- Respect wildlife. View from a distance and never feed wild animals. Store all food in your vehicle.

- Don't leave your mark on the park. Carving or scratching into rocks or trees is vandalism.

- Know the rules. Pets and bicycles are not permitted on trails.

Where to Bike

THE GRAND LOOP

Try this 33-mile loop through the monument for a challenging ride with amazing views. Start at either entrance and ride up and over Rim Rock Drive (23 miles, +2,200 feet). Use Broadway (Hwy 340), South Broadway and South Camp to return to your vehicle.

VISITOR CENTER TO ARTISTS POINT

For a less strenuous option, ride from the visitor center to Artists Point (14 miles roundtrip, +500 feet). Along the way, you'll enjoy great views of Monument Canyon and many of the park's monoliths.

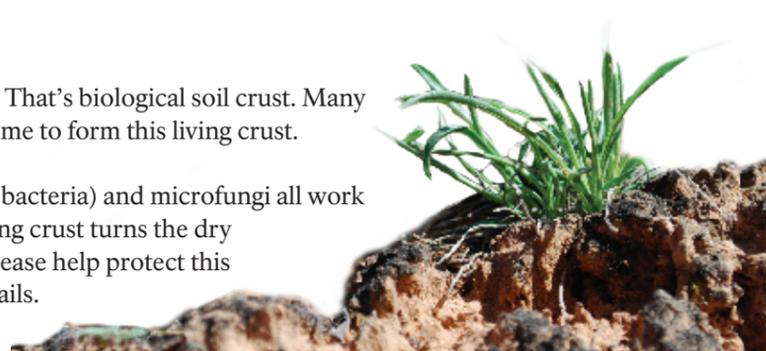


View from the top.

Don't Bust the Crust!

Have you noticed the dark, bumpy soil along the trail? That's biological soil crust. Many small organisms grow together over a long period of time to form this living crust.

Moss, lichen, green algae, cyanobacteria (sigh-AN-oh bacteria) and microfungi all work together to hold sand grains in place. This slow-growing crust turns the dry desert sand into healthy soil where plants can grow. Please help protect this important desert resource by staying on established trails.



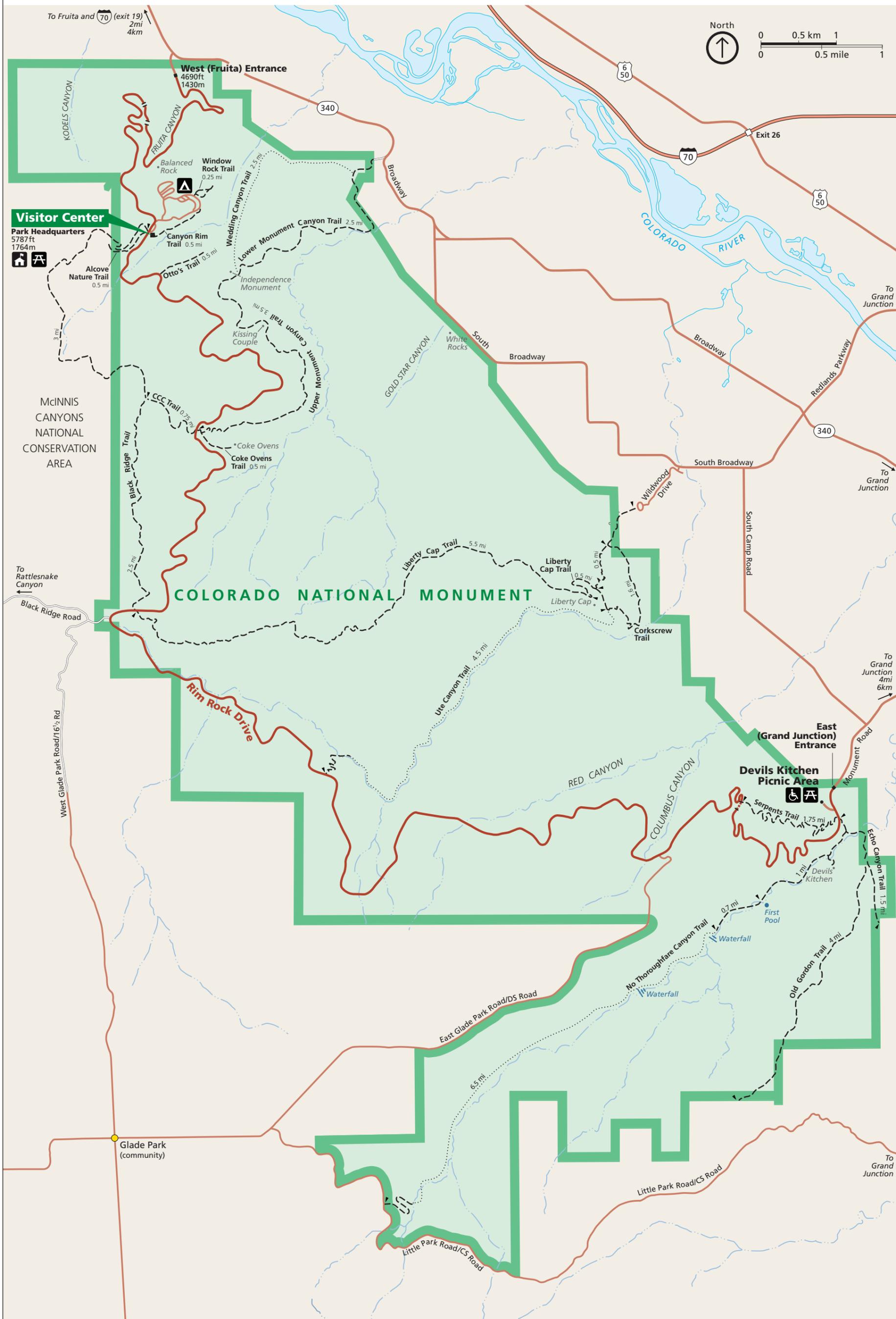
Some land outside the park boundary is privately owned. Please respect the owners' rights and do not trespass.

--- Hiking trail
 = Unpaved road

..... Unmaintained trail
 ▶ 7mi Distance along trail

🏠 Ranger station
 ♿ Wheelchair-accessible

🏕️ Campground
 🍷 Picnic area



Things are Heating Up

NORTHERN COLORADO PLATEAU MONITORING NETWORK SCIENTISTS

Standing at Cold Shivers Point on a brisk Colorado morning, it might be hard to imagine that annual average temperatures at Colorado National Monument are getting warmer. But the last decade has been warmer than any other decade in the past century—and the future will likely be even warmer. How warm?



Climate Change will have ecosystem-wide effects

Climate scientists say that by 2100, average annual temperatures may increase by 4–9 °F at the monument.

Although “4 to 9 degrees warmer” may not sound like a big deal, it actually takes a lot of warmer days in a year to budge the average annual temperature. A few really hot days or a few really cold days, hardly have any effect on the annual average. In fact, an increase of 4–9 degrees would make the average annual temperature in Grand Junction, Colorado, more like today’s temperatures in northern or southern Arizona (see graph below).

So what’s the big deal? Nearly all living things in Colorado National Monument depend on soil moisture, which comes from rain and snow. All are affected by temperature. Here’s how: Warmer temperatures tend to dry soil faster. Dry soil can stress vegetation, making it more difficult for plants to grow and reproduce, leaving them vulnerable to disease. Dry soil also sets the stage for fire. If the soil and vegetation are both dry, then fires tend to burn far more rapidly and intensely.

What does the future hold for Colorado National Monument? It depends. The degree to which climate change will affect species and ecosystems partly depends on all of us, because we will decide whether to reduce emissions from vehicles and power plants, or continue on our current course. Temperature change depends on concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere, and human activities account for the majority of increasing CO₂ currently entering our atmosphere.

Science suggests that if precipitation decreases, stays the same, or increases only slightly as temperatures continue to rise, water-stressed vegetation, pine beetle-killed trees, and areas burnt by wildfire will all be more common at the monument. As temperatures continue to warm, it is likely that the types of plants and animals that can survive here will change, as well.

Scientists from the National Park Service’s Northern Colorado Plateau Network will be tracking long-term changes in climate along with changes in vegetation. This will provide managers with the information they need to help mitigate the effects of climate change on the park’s natural wonders.

What can you do? Our choices make a difference. As an agency or as individuals, we have opportunities to work toward a better future. While individual actions may seem insignificant, together they add up. Look for opportunities to collect data that can be used for decision making; talk about climate change and work to influence policy; and choose careers, lifestyles, and actions that will help minimize the impacts of climate change. For more information visit, www.nps.gov/climatechange.

The Northern Colorado Plateau Network collects, analyzes, and reports on long-term natural resource data to inform National Park Service decision making. Learn more at <http://go.nps.gov/ncpnIM>.

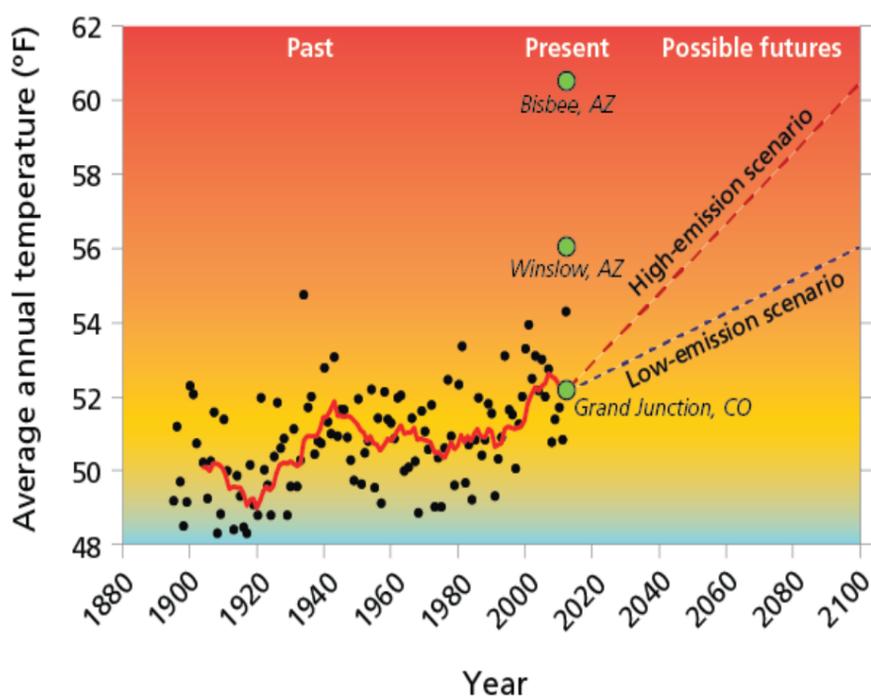


Figure caption: Annual average temperatures at Colorado National Monument. Under a high-emission scenario, Grand Junction’s average annual temperature in 2100 may be similar to that of southern Arizona (Bisbee) today. Under a low-emission scenario, Grand Junction’s average annual temperature may be more like that of present-day northern Arizona (Winslow). Source: PRISM climate data, Tabor and Williams 2010 projections.

Weather Summary

Month	Average High	Average Low	Average Precip.
January	37°F / 3°C	17°F / -9°C	0.6 IN / 1.5 CM
February	46°F / 8°C	24°F / -5°C	0.6 IN / 1.3 CM
March	57°F / 14°C	32°F / 0°C	1.0 IN / 2.5 CM
April	65°F / 19°C	39°F / 4°C	0.9 IN / 2.3 CM
May	76°F / 24°C	48°F / 9°C	1.0 IN / 2.5 CM
June	88°F / 31°C	57°F / 4°C	0.4 IN / 1.0 CM
July	93°F / 34°C	64°F / 18°C	0.7 IN / 1.8 CM
August	90°F / 32°C	62°F / 17°C	0.8 IN / 2.0 CM
September	81°F / 27°C	53°F / 12°C	0.9 IN / 2.3 CM
October	67°F / 20°C	41°F / 5°C	1.0 IN / 2.5 CM
November	50°F / 10°C	28°F / -2°C	0.7 IN / 1.8 CM
December	39°F / 10°C	19°F / -7°C	0.5 IN / 1.3 CM

Weather & Climate

SPRING

This shoulder season between the frigid winters and searing summers usually has consistently pleasant weather. Daytime temperatures are in the 70s and low 80s, while nighttime lows are between 30° and 50°F. Shifting global wind patterns can bring large storm systems. Be prepared for sudden weather changes.

SUMMER

June—August are the park’s busiest and hottest months. Temperatures can reach 100°F in the afternoons, so plan your activities for the cooler morning and evening hours. The late summer ‘monsoon season’ may bring afternoon thunderstorms from the middle of July into September. These storms can cause localized flash floods in the canyons. Be alert for such conditions.

AUTUMN

As the days shorten and the leaves change colors, you’ll enjoy mild daytime and cooler evening temperatures. Just as in the spring, the weather can change rapidly. Snowstorms may come as soon as late October. Be prepared for unpredictable weather this time of year.

WINTER

Although the monument receives an average of three feet of snow each year, temperatures and snowfall vary greatly. During heavy snow years, cross country skiing and snowshoeing are popular on many trails. Rim Rock Drive remains open throughout the winter, but usually has patches of ice and snow.

Canyon Country Wildlife Watching



Desert bighorn sheep ram (male)



Collared lizard

Wildlife Watching Etiquette

During your visit, you may get an opportunity to see desert bighorn sheep scaling cliffs or golden eagles soaring over the canyons. These sightings are a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Even the most seasoned observer can get lost in such moments. Please be a respectful guest, it will keep you and the wildlife safe. Ask a ranger at the visitor center for more wildlife viewing tips.

Respect Wildlife

Please keep all animals wild and healthy by viewing them from a safe distance. Do not feed or touch wildlife. All wildlife (including lizards) are protected. Collecting is prohibited. Store food and trash responsibly throughout your visit.

Where can I see Wildlife?

Desert Bighorn Sheep

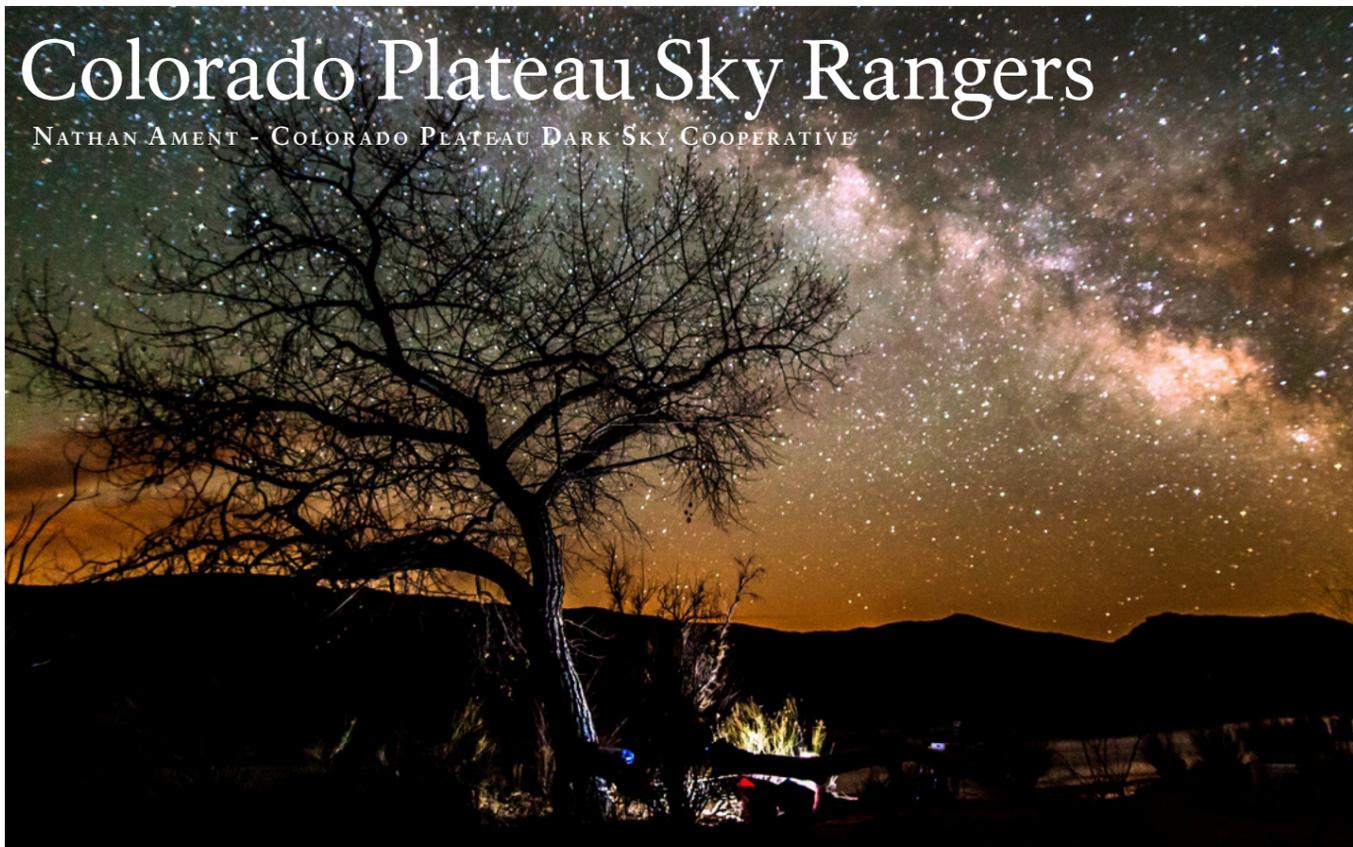
These herbivores (grass-eaters) have special hooves for gripping rock. Look for them on the sandstone cliffs and rocky slopes along Rim Rock Drive from the West (Fruita) Entrance to Grand View, and along the Monument Canyon Trail.

Collared Lizards

Don’t be fooled by their bright colors; these lizards are serious predators and often eat other lizards. The best place to spot them is on the No Thoroughfare Canyon and Lower Monument Canyon Trails. Many varieties of lizards can be found throughout the park.

Colorado Plateau Sky Rangers

NATHAN AMENT - COLORADO PLATEAU DARK SKY COOPERATIVE



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Sunrise & Sunset

Date	Sunrise	Sunset
March 1	6:47am	6:08pm
March 15	7:26am	7:22pm
April 1	6:59am	7:39pm
April 15	6:38am	7:52pm
May 1	6:17am	8:08pm
May 15	6:02am	8:21pm
June 1	5:51am	8:35pm
June 15	5:48am	8:43pm
July 1	5:53am	8:45pm
July 15	6:01am	8:40pm
August 1	6:15am	8:27pm
August 15	6:28am	8:10pm
September 1	6:44am	7:45pm
September 15	6:55am	7:23pm
October 1	7:11am	6:57pm
October 15	7:25am	6:36pm
November 1	7:43am	6:14pm
November 15	6:58am	5:00pm
December 1	7:15am	4:53pm
December 15	7:27am	4:53pm

On a clear night at Colorado National Monument, the views of the night sky—thousands of twinkling stars above steep canyon walls and towering monoliths—rival the daytime scenes that draw hundreds of thousands of people here every year.

In a collaborative effort to “celebrate starry skies” above Colorado National Monument and across the Colorado Plateau, America’s first voluntary Dark Sky Cooperative is organizing to promote the preservation and enjoyment of night skies in this vast region. The four corners of Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico, has a unique combination of high elevation, excellent air quality, low population density and frequent cloud-free weather that afford world-class viewing and enjoyment of naturally dark, star-filled skies. In much of the developed world, the experience of a dark sky in one’s own back yard is disappearing or gone. On the Colorado Plateau, the exceptional unfettered view of the Milky Way, planets, meteors and galaxies has become a major reason for many to visit from around the world.

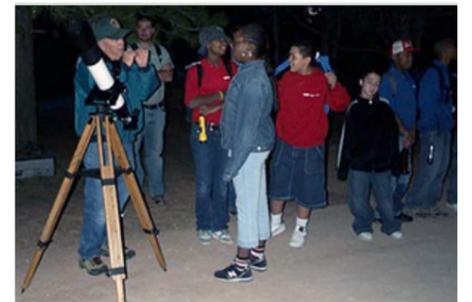
The Colorado Plateau Dark Sky Cooperative was created in response to the NPS initiative, Starry Starry Night, with the mission to perpetuate starry night skies by linking communities, tribes, businesses, government agencies, and citizens in a collaborative effort to celebrate the view of the cosmos, minimize the impact of outdoor lighting, and ultimately restore natural darkness to the area. The initiative intends to support all who voluntarily seek to protect, enhance and appreciate the plateau’s night sky resource as a recreational, economic and educational treasure. Other dark-sky benefits include improved human and nocturnal wildlife health, energy conservation, cultural heritage, preservation of rural lands, promotion of astronomy and the inspiration of youth.

Here at Colorado National Monument, visitors have the rare opportunity to view some of the darkest skies on the fringe of the largest city on the Colorado Plateau.

The proximity of the Grand Valley to the monument represents a unique opportunity for night sky partnerships between a park and a large community. Visitors and locals alike can enjoy the easy access to dark night skies, while also contributing to the preservation of those same skies by promoting night-sky friendly lighting practices in their homes and communities. Astronomy experiences hosted by the Western Colorado Astronomy Club, night hikes, and special celestial events (meteor showers, lunar eclipses) are excellent reasons to explore Colorado National Monument and spend an evening under the stars. A schedule of programs can be obtained at the visitor center.

Looking to 2014 and beyond to the 2016 NPS Centennial, the Cooperative and Colorado National Monument will continue to foster these and more collaborative efforts to sustain dark night skies on the Colorado Plateau.

For more information on the Cooperative, contact Nate Ament at nathan_ament@nps.gov, (435) 719-2349.



Stargazing Programs

In cooperation with our local partner, the Western Colorado Astronomy Club, there will be numerous opportunities to view the night sky by telescope. Rangers and local astronomers will be on hand to present constellation tours and answer questions.

Night sky programs generally take place near the New Moon, Full Moon or special events such as meteor showers.

A schedule of astronomy programs hosted by the Western Colorado Astronomy Club can be found on their website at: www.wcacastronomy.org/

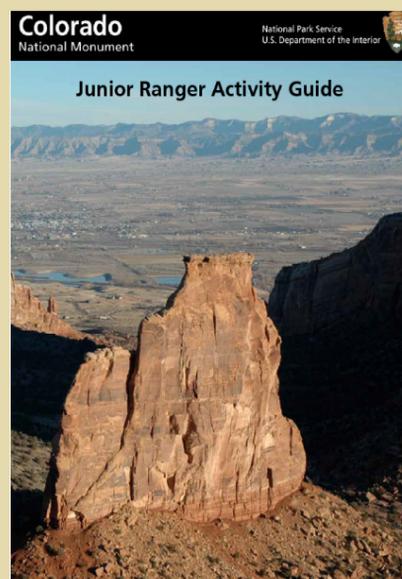
Additional night hikes and talks will be presented throughout the year. See a ranger at the visitor center for a current schedule.

Earn Your Junior Ranger Badge

Hey kids of all ages! Do you want to explore, learn about and help protect national parks? If so, then you should become an official Junior Ranger. It usually takes around two hours to complete the required activities and go on a hike to earn your badge. Pick up a free activity guide at the visitor center.



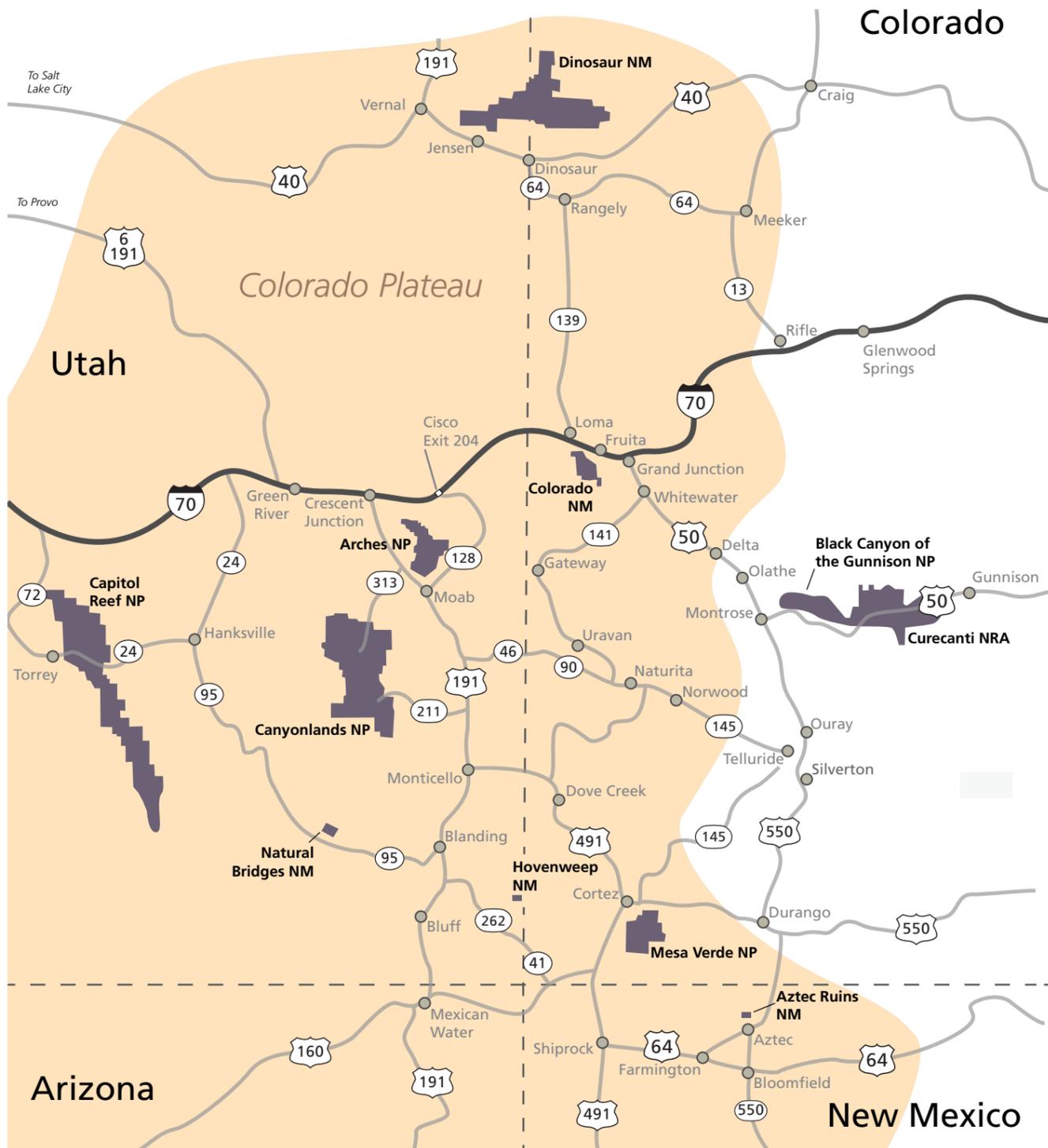
If you have a little extra time, check out the Junior Ranger Explorer Backpack. This exciting kit is full of tools and activities to help you explore the monument's rocks, plants and animals. You can check out the backpack from the visitor center for a half day of adventure!



Sustainable Parks

In an effort to decrease waste and litter, national parks around the country are eliminating the sale of disposable water bottles. We are proud to join this effort and no longer sell bottled water in the park. BPA-free reusable plastic and metal water bottles are available for sale in the visitor center store. Water bottle filling stations are located at all picnic areas, in the campground and at the visitor center. Thanks for helping us do our part to reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions.





Where to go next...

Destination	Distance	Drive Time
Arches NP/Moab	115 miles	2 hours
Canyonlands NP	120 miles	2½ hours
Black Canyon NP	90 miles	2 hours
Denver, CO	260 miles	4½ hours
Dinosaur NM	125 miles	3 hours
Salt Lake City, UT	275 miles	4½ hours

Area Information

Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road Grand Jct., CO 81506
970-244-3000 www.blm.gov

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
970-858-3894 www.fruitachamber.org

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

US Forest Service
2777 Crossroads Blvd. Unit 1
Grand Jct., CO 81506
970-242-8211 www.fs.fed.us

Colorado National Monument Association

Preserve | Protect | Partner

Join us in Preserving a National Treasure

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

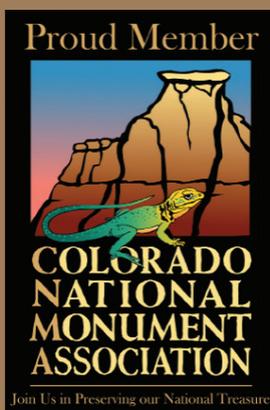
Become a member of the association and help preserve and protect Colorado National Monument for future generations. Annual membership fees start at \$30. Join at the visitor center store and receive a free gift. All levels of membership receive the following benefits:

- 15% discount at the visitor center store
- Discounts at participating park stores throughout the national park system
- Monthly E-newsletter
- Advance notice of special events and programs

To become a member, stop by the visitor center, go online or give us a call.
www.coloradonma.org 970-858-3617 ext. 308 or 307

Thanks to CNMA for their support in 2013!

Each year, Colorado National Monument Association funds special projects and operations to support the National Park Service mission. In 2013, CNMA funded a paleontological internship position, wi-fi access at the visitor center for the public, a water filling station at the visitor center, visitor guide printing and seasonal cashiers at the CNMA store. This support was made possible through donations, retail store revenue and CNMA membership fees.



Stop by the CNMA store at the visitor center. It's more than books. FREE Wi-Fi available!

- | | | |
|------------|--------------------|---------------|
| calendars | hats | tote bags |
| CDs & DVDs | Junior Ranger gear | toys |
| clothing | magnets | visors |
| plush toys | maps | water bottles |
| games | t-shirts | & more |

Your purchase supports projects at Colorado National Monument.

