



## HISTORY OF THE NCA

During the Upper-Jurassic Period between 146 and 156 million years ago, McInnis Canyons NCA was part of a basin of shallow lakes, meandering streams, and sub-tropical vegetation. Some dinosaurs got stuck in the soft mud near ponds, where they became easy prey for meat eating dinosaurs. If an animal or plant is quickly buried, it may be preserved as a fossil, which happened a lot in this area. As a result, McInnis Canyons offers an amazing diversity of fossilized plants and animals.

About 4 million years ago during the late Cenozoic Era, movements within the earth began to uplift an area from Fruita to Montrose creating the Uncompahgre Plateau. Canyons eroded into the northwest flank of this uplifted area. The forces of water, wind, and gravity continue to sculpt this spectacular landscape today.

As early as 13,000 years ago, Native Americans used the area for hunting animals and gathering plants. By 500 AD, Fremont farmers entered west-central Colorado. The Fremont Culture was responsible for much of the rock art found in the area.

The Utes were the most recent Native American occupants of western Colorado, and were one of the first tribes to acquire horses. Small family groups camped, hunted, and gathered foods in local canyons and on nearby mesas. Utes may have walked or lived near the same trails you visit today. Be sure to respect this area's rich heritage.

## BECOME A FRIEND OF THE NCA

Friends of McInnis Canyons NCA partners with the BLM in stewardship of the NCA. The FMC is committed to enhancing personal and community stewardship of the natural, cultural, recreational, and heritage resources on public lands in the NCA.

FMC activities include volunteer projects such as trail work and Adopt-A-Highway, educational activities like guest speakers and community information tables at local events, and social activities such as a winter mixer and National Public Lands Day celebrations.

### To find out more information about FMC:

Visit the Friends of McInnis Canyons NCA website at:  
[www.mcinniscanyons.org](http://www.mcinniscanyons.org)



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
**McINNIS CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA**  
2814 H Road, Grand Junction, Colorado, 81506  
970-244-3000

[www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/mcnca.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/mcnca.html)

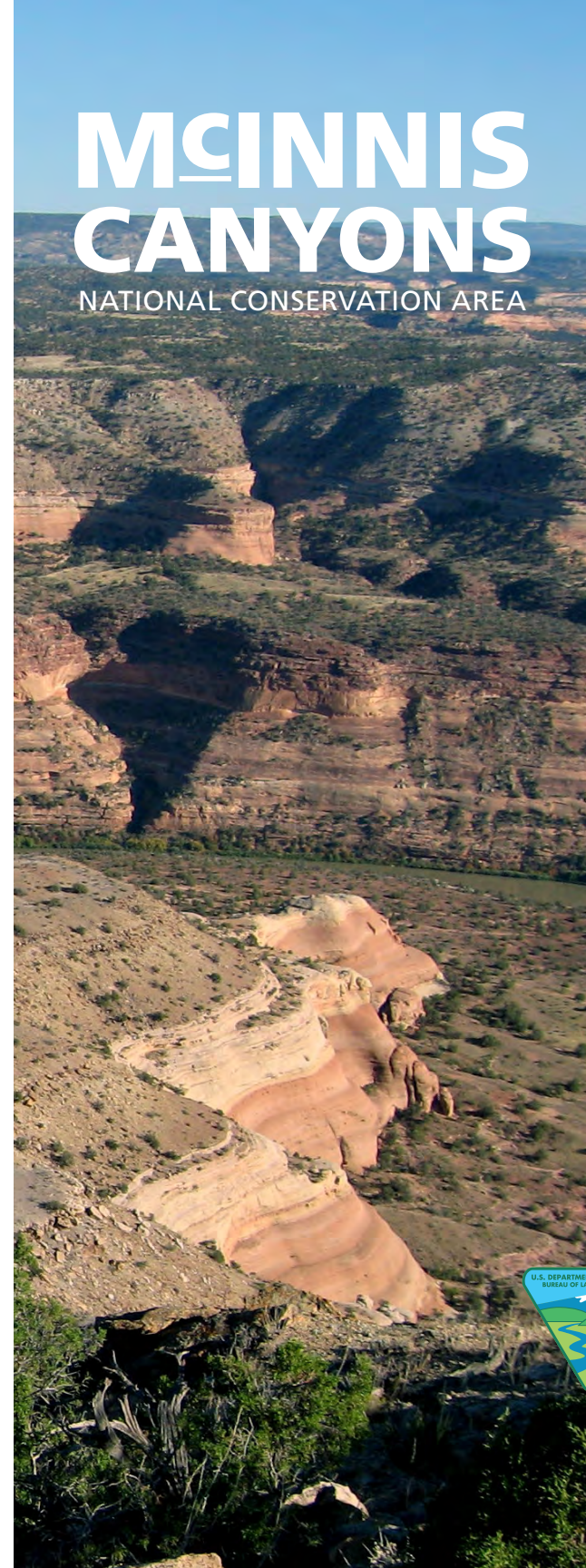
**FOR NON EMERGENCIES:**  
Call the Mesa County Sheriff at 970-244-3500

**FOR EMERGENCIES:** Call 911

This brochure printed in-part through funding from the City of Fruita.

# McINNIS CANYONS

NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA



BLM

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO





## WELCOME TO McINNIS CANYONS NCA

McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area (NCA) forms a part of the Uncompahgre Plateau, which rises like a giant rolling wave above the Grand Valley of Colorado. Rugged canyons descend to the Colorado River and contain some of the most spectacular landforms found anywhere in the country. Rattlesnake Canyon, Dinosaur Hill, Devils Canyon, and Mee Canyon are just a few of the areas that contribute to the mystery, splendor and diversity of this landscape.

You will not find paved roads, visitor centers, or manicured trail heads, but you may discover a sense of wonder, exploration and adventure in a landscape of humbling beauty.

**Wildlife:** In this high-desert country, bighorn sheep still leap among the rocks, mountain lions roam the piñon-covered slopes of Black Ridge, and elk and eagle share a seldom-visited wilderness.

**Water:** A gentle stretch of the Colorado River winds across over 20 miles through Ruby and Horsethief Canyons, offering spectacular opportunities for floating through the heart of the NCA.

**Trails:** Primitive roads and trails offer motoring challenges and equestrian routes. Mountain bike trails abound

on Mack Ridge, including the internationally famous Kokopelli's Trail, testing riders' skills for 140 miles before ending in Moab, Utah.

**History:** Traditional historical land-uses are maintained in areas where cattle still graze and hunters wander the slopes in search of game.

**Geology:** The geologic story of McInnis Canyons NCA is one of deposition and erosion. Through time, layer upon layer of sediments were deposited in shallow seas and meandering river systems that occupied what is now western Colorado.

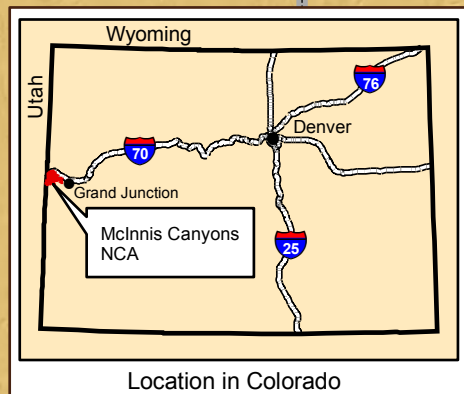
**Paleontology:** A high concentration of dinosaur fossils is found imbedded in the rocks in and around McInnis Canyons. In locations such as the Trail Through Time, Dinosaur Hill, and the Fruita Paleontological Area, visitors can view dinosaur bones or watch a paleontological dig in progress.

**Natural Arches:** Ongoing uplift of the Uncompahgre Plateau and erosion have resulted in colorful cliffs, deep canyons, and sculpted alcoves and arches. Rattlesnake Canyon contains one of the largest concentrations of natural arches in the Western United States.

## HELP PROTECT YOUR NCA

- Pack out all trash
- Tread Lightly and Leave No Trace
- Keep on designated roads and trails
- Drive and ride carefully and courteously
- Follow trail etiquette: bikers yield to hikers, all users yield to horses by stepping off the trail on the downhill side
- Use designated and existing campsites and park in designated parking areas; do not disturb new areas
- Wilderness campsites should be at least 200 feet (75 paces) from water
- Use camp stoves for cooking
- If you need a warming fire, use a firepan and pack out ashes
- On the river, use a portable, washable toilet, and pack out the waste
- In other areas, dispose of human waste by digging a shallow "cat hole" at least 200 feet from water and trails. Do not burn your toilet paper (this may cause a wildfire). Pack out toilet paper.





### McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area and Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness

BLM	McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area
Private	Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness
State	No Camping Area
National Park Service	
Highways	4wd
Access Roads	Motorized Trail
County Roads	Non Motorized Trail
Kokopelli's Trail	Non Motorized - Non Mechanized Trail

0 1 2 3 4 Miles

This Map was Produced by the BLM Grand Junction Field Office January 2009

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This project was developed through digital means and may be updated without notice.

The McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area is part of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System. This Conservation System conserves, protects, and restores some of America's most spectacular landscapes as a part of the agency's multiple use mandate. Consisting of about 27 million acres of public lands congressionally and presidentially set aside for their recreational, cultural, scientific, and other values, the Conservation System has over 850 National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Historic Trails. BLM Colorado manages 65 Conservation System areas encompassing over 1 million acres—about 1/8 of the 8.3 million acres of BLM land in the state.

#### Key to Symbols

Handicap Accessible Trail	Interpretive Trail
Horseback Riding	Mountain Biking
ATV	Camping
Motorcycle	Hiking
4WD	Toilet



## FOR YOUR PROTECTION

McInnis Canyons NCA is a rugged and remote landscape. It can be very unforgiving of any carelessness. Always be prepared for your visit to the NCA.

### Always:

- Carry a map, compass, extra water, food, first-aid kit and warm clothing
- Tell someone where you're going and when you expect to return
- Carry a gallon of water per person, per day
- Use sunscreen and a hat
- Wear sturdy footwear and watch where you step
- Be aware of fire danger and be careful with any type of flame
- Avoid ridge tops and open ground during lightning storms
- Be alert for flash floods in the canyon bottoms
- Untreated water may not be safe to drink

### Seasonally:

- Carry insect repellent to fend off the biting gnats that can be a problem from May- August.
- Do not enter the seasonal pools that may exist in the canyon bottoms from April-July. Sunscreens and lotions can pollute these ephemeral waters.

## LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

Paleontological and cultural sites help us understand our past. These sites vary from fossils to lithic scatters (chipping sites associated with making stone tools) to rock art. Paleontologists and archeologists study these sites and materials to help interpret our past. Please do not remove any materials from these sites!

The National Conservation Area is closed to all fossil collecting and serves as an outdoor museum of the life and people who came before us. Enjoy rock art but do not touch it! Do not remove any materials from these sites! Help protect your heritage.

Violation of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA) can result in a \$20,000 fine and imprisonment for up to 2 years for illegal excavation or vandalism of cultural resources.