



Black Canyon of the Gunnison Curecanti Gunnison Gorge



Early morning light bathes the adobe hills of Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area.

Help Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers

Can you imagine Blue Mesa Reservoir infested with millions of mussels that would harm the Kokanee salmon fishery; the Gunnison Gorge choked with thick mats of algae that would hinder boating; or perhaps the Gunnison River through the Black Canyon covered with millions of tiny snails that would disrupt the ecosystem and starve trout? Neither can we.

In January of 2008, invasive mussels were discovered in Colorado for the first time in Pueblo Reservoir. As a result the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management are serious about preventing the introduction of invasive aquatic species and desperately need your help in keeping your rivers and reservoirs clean, clear, and fishable.

There are hundreds of different harmful invasive aquatic species ranging from plants, fish, amphibians, crustaceans, and mollusks, to diseases or pathogens. Zebra and Quagga mussels are freshwater, bivalve mollusks that typically have a dark and white (zebra-like) pattern on their shells. In their earliest life stages, they are microscopic, making them impossible to detect with visual inspection. Mussels and other nuisance species such as New Zealand mudsnails, purple loosestrife, and didymo are spreading across North America at an alarming rate through transportation by recreational boaters, commercial haulers, and fishermen. These nuisance species can hitch a ride on our waders, boats, and other equipment used in the water.

When we go to another lake or stream, they can be released and produce permanent,

disastrous results. Many of these organisms are so small you may not realize they are hitching a ride and may only take one individual to start a new population.

In Blue Mesa Reservoir mussels would disrupt the fishery by reducing natural food sources, litter beaches with sharp, odor-producing shells, and ruin boat engines and steering equipment. There is no environmentally sound or inexpensive way to eliminate aquatic nuisance species once they are established. People love to spend time on the water and protecting these aquatic resources is everyone's responsibility. Don't be the one person who infests the waters that we all share.

Beginning in Spring 2008, all watercraft on Blue Mesa Reservoir will need to be certified as Zebra and Quagga mussel-free. See page 7 for certification details.

For more information on what you can do to help, ask a ranger or visitor center staff or visit any of these websites:

- www.nps.gov/cure
- www.100thmeridian.org
- www.protectyourwaters.net



Zebra Mussels looking to hitch a ride into Blue Mesa Reservoir

Stopping Aquatic Hitchhikers

Follow these general procedures every time you come in contact with any body of water:

- Remove all visible mud, plants, fish, & animals. Before leaving any body of water, it is important to examine all your equipment (boats, trailers, clothing, boots, buckets, etc).
- Eliminate water from all equipment before transporting anywhere. Most water recreational equipment contains spots where water can collect and harbor aquatic hitchhikers.
- Clean and dry anything that came in contact with the water (equipment, clothing, even dogs!).
- Never release or put plants, fish or animals into water unless they came out of that body of water.
- Specific procedures and certifications are found on page 7.

Welcome

Units of the National Park Service and of the Bureau of Land Management belong to the American people, and by extension, to the world. Protecting lands of unique character, scientific, scenic, historic and recreational value has been described as "America's Best Idea".

We invite you to check out your public lands and see how we are doing in keeping them for this and future generations. Rangers at the visitor centers and in the backcountry will help you plan safe and unforgettable experiences.

If you are traveling with children, make an extra effort on their behalf. For many of us, it has been our interactions not only with the natural beauty of the landscape, but with rangers at programs and in the backcountry that have encouraged our love of the outdoors.

We are all stewards of these lands. We hope you discover something you never knew before. It could be something about yourself or a meaningful connection to nature or history. We hope you take a life-long spark of interest home with you when you leave these three areas managed in cooperation by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

Connie Rudd
Superintendent,
Black Canyon and
Curecanti

Karen Tucker
Area Manager,
Gunnison Gorge

We're on the Web

Visit the parks all year from the comfort of your home computer.

Black Canyon:
<http://www.nps.gov/blca>

Curecanti:
<http://www.nps.gov/cure>

Gunnison Gorge:
<http://www.co.blm.gov/ggnca>

Bienvenido al Parque Nacional Cañón Negro del Río Gunnison

Nos alegra que usted haya venido al parque y esperamos que disfrute su visita. Tal vez quisiera caminar por el sendero Oak Flats, o mirar la película en el centro de visitantes. Si usted disfruta de la pesca, traiga su caña de pescar al Pórtico del Este y pruebe su suerte. Sus hijos pueden llegar a ser pequeño guardaparques (Jr. Rangers), después de completar el librito gratis

disponible en el centro de visitantes. Cada mes, ofrecemos programas o excursiones en español. Si a usted le interesa esto, pide más información en el centro de visitantes. Si podemos hacer algo para servirle mejor, por favor avísenos. Esperamos que usted volverá al Cañón Negro algún día muy pronto.

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park & Curecanti

National Recreation Area
Together, Black Canyon and Curecanti offer nearly 75,000 acres of canyons, knife-edged cliffs, water sports, and beauty.

Mailing Address

Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP
Curecanti NRA
102 Elk Creek
Gunnison CO 81230

Phone and E-mail

970-641-2337
cure_info@nps.gov



Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area

Gunnison Gorge NCA provides 63,000 acres of beautiful landscapes. High clearance vehicles recommended. There are few services, so be self-sufficient.

Mailing Address

Gunnison Gorge NCA
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose CO 81401

Phone and E-mail

970-240-5300
co_info@blm.gov



Backcountry Camping at Curecanti National Recreation Area

Information and Services

EMERGENCIES

For emergency services, dial 911. Phones are available at the Elk Creek, Lake Fork, Cimarron, and South Rim Visitor Centers, and at the Stevens Creek Campground.

ENTRANCE FEES AND PASSES

Black Canyon entrance fees are \$15.00 per vehicle. For pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcycles, the fee is \$7.00 per person. A Black Canyon Annual Pass is available for \$30.00 and is valid for 12 months from the date of purchase. Curecanti does not charge an entrance fee except at East Portal (which is included in the Black Canyon entrance fee).

Gunnison Gorge Wilderness day use fee is \$3.00 per person, payable at trailheads.

For visitors interested in visiting multiple public lands, the America the Beautiful - National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass Program (Interagency Pass Program) is available. Senior and Access passes are also available.

VISITOR CENTERS

Black Canyon
The South Rim Visitor Center is open every day except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Summer hours are 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Winter hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Curecanti

The Elk Creek Visitor Center is open every day from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. Winter hours are Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. The Cimarron and the Lake Fork Visitor Centers will be open intermittently during the summer.

CAMPING

Black Canyon
The South Rim Campground is open all year. There are no water hookups or dump stations. Loop B has electrical hookups (only open in the summer). Sites can be reserved through www.recreation.gov (877-444-6777).

Loops A and C are \$12.00 per night. Loop B is \$18.00 per night.

The East Portal Campground has 15 tent sites, first-come, first-served. Sites are \$12.00 per night.

The North Rim Campground has 13 sites and fills on a first-come basis and are \$12.00 per night. There are no hookups on the North Rim.

Curecanti

There are several campgrounds with boat-in, drive-in and hike-in access. Group camping is available at Red Creek and East Elk Creek. Electric hookups are in Loop D at the Elk Creek Campground. The camping fee is \$12.00 per night. Loop D is \$18.00 per night. Reservations can be made for Elk Creek, Lake Fork, and Stevens Creek sites, and for the East Elk Creek and Red Creek group sites through www.recreation.gov (877-444-6777).

Gunnison Gorge

Vehicle camping is permitted outside the wilderness area on a first-come, first-served basis. Picnic tables and fire grates are available at the Chukar, Duncan, and Ute trailheads and at the Gunnison Forks Day Use Area. Additional campsites and services are available at the Gunnison River Pleasure Park. Camping in the wilderness area is first-come, first-served in designated sites. Sites are marked by posts with blue (boater) or green (hiker) tops. Camping is \$10.00 per person for 1 night, \$15.00 per person for 2 nights (maximum allowable wilderness stay). Camping fees apply to all users ages 16 and older.

Interagency Senior and Access Pass discounts apply to all camping fees at all three areas.

SHOWERS

Showers are available at the Elk Creek and Lake Fork marinas in Curecanti and at the Gunnison River Pleasure Park.

FOOD SERVICES

Pappy's Restaurant at Elk Creek Marina is open May-September. Full

Activities

| | Black Canyon | Curecanti | Gunnison Gorge |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| Visitor Center | ● | ● | |
| Ranger Programs | ● | ● | |
| Picnic Areas | ● | ● | ● |
| Boat Rentals | | ● | |
| Boat Tours | | ● | |
| Backcountry Camping | ● | | ● |
| Wilderness | ● | | ● |
| Developed Camping | ● | ● | |
| Group Camping | | ● | |
| Showers | | ● | |
| Fishing (lake) | | ● | |
| Fishing (river/stream) | ● | ● | ● |
| Hiking | ● | ● | ● |
| Rock Climbing | ● | ● | |
| Horse Trail | ● | ● | ● |
| Kayaking (river) | ● | ● | ● |
| Rafting (river) | | ● | ● |
| Personal Water Craft | | ● | |
| Motorboats/Sailing | | ● | |
| Hunting | | ● | ● |
| Snowmobiling | ● | ● | |
| Cross-country Skiing | ● | ● | |
| Mountain Biking | | | ● |
| 4WD/OHV | | ● | ● |

food services are available in Montrose and Gunnison.

PETS

At Black Canyon pets on a six-foot leash may be walked on roads, in campgrounds, to the overlooks, and are allowed on the Rim Rock and Chasm View trails. Pets are not allowed on any other trails, inner canyon routes, or in the Wilderness. Clean up after your pet. Do not leave your pet unattended; boarding services are available in the local area.

Pets are allowed at Curecanti, but must be leashed at all times. Pets at Gunnison Gorge NCA must be under their owner's control at all times.

Boat Tours Into the Black Canyon of the Gunnison



A tour boat takes passengers on a close up tour of the upper Black Canyon.

Join a Park Ranger for a leisurely boat tour on Morrow Point Reservoir, traveling seven miles into the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, where canyon walls will tower above you. Hear the stories of the geologic history, wildlife, rugged early inhabitants, the narrow gauge railroad, and the dams and reservoirs.

Logistics

The National Park Service tour boat is a stable 40-foot, 42-passenger pontoon boat. Tours are offered twice daily at 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day, everyday of the week except Tuesdays (this is subject to change). Check with a ranger to ask about occasional special tours. Tours begin at the Pine Creek Boat Dock, located 35 miles east of Montrose, 25 miles west of Gunnison, at US Highway 50 mile marker 130. From

the Pine Creek parking lot, walk down 232 steps, (remember, you'll have to walk back up too!) then enjoy an easy ½ mile walk along the old narrow gauge rail bed to the boat dock. We suggest starting down one hour before your scheduled tour, allowing more time if you need a slower pace. Meet the Park Ranger at the boat dock at least 15 minutes before your scheduled departure.

What to Bring

Dress for the Colorado mountains, where a sunny day can quickly become stormy. Bring drinking water, snacks, sun and rain protection, and your camera. For security reasons, carry-on bags and packs are subject to search. Pets, smoking, and alcoholic beverages are not allowed on the tour. Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs) are available and must be worn by youth age 12 and under.

Reservations

Prepaid reservations are required, and are occasionally still available early on the day of the tour. Call 970-641-2337, ext 205, or visit the Elk Creek Visitor Center at Curecanti National Recreation Area. Persons arriving at the boat dock without a reservation will not be permitted on the tour.

Cost

\$15.00 for adults
\$7.50 for adults who possess a Senior or Access Pass
\$7.50 for infants and children under age 13



Junior Rangers



JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

Help take care of your national treasures! Anyone ages 6 and up can become a Junior Park Ranger at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park or Curecanti National Recreation Area. There are challenging activities in the Junior Ranger books that you can do while visiting either park. Learn more about the stuff that makes these places so amazing and unique. If you are under the age of 5, you can become a Curecanti or Black Canyon Ranger Buddy. Stop by the Elk Creek, Cimarron, or South Rim Visitor Centers for more information.

ADVANCED JUNIOR RANGER

When you're strolling through the Black Canyon campground this summer, you might come upon a

group of eager children leading each other around with a compass or searching for camouflaged insects. These children, the Advanced Junior Rangers, take part in hands-on science activities and explore the National Park throughout the summer, earning a special badge at the end-of-season family campout celebration.

The children become immersed in nature during their weekly activities, which results in a feeling of appreciation for our National Parks. One third grade participant said, "I wish I could be in the National Park every day. It's so peaceful here and I'm always learning about cool things."

If you have the chance, talk to one of the young rangers. Their enthusiasm for the park will inspire you. The Advanced Junior Rangers are truly creating a bright future for the National Park Service.



Kids at an advanced Jr. Ranger program at Black Canyon.

Geology in Action

From the human perspective it is not always easy to see a geologic process in action. However, sometimes such a catastrophic event happens that change can't be missed.

On the morning of Friday, April 4th, a rock wall west of the Crystal Dam broke loose thousands of tons of rock that rained down on the East Portal Road. One boulder weighing 3,375 tons or 6.75 million pounds smashed a 100 foot section of the road, leaving a crater 8 feet deep. Jerry Denison, a Bureau of Reclamation employee, was a witness to the rock fall and said it lasted nearly 6 hours and was the largest rock fall he has ever seen.

East Portal is a popular spot for camping, fishing, and anyone in search of an adventure. The road starts at the top of the canyon and descends 6 miles down a very steep and curving road. In a three mile section you drop an amazing 1800 feet. Because of the steep canyon walls this is an area



Damage to East Portal road from boulder.

where there can be frequent rock falls, especially in the spring as the snow melts. The area where this most recent rock fall occurred has been an active fall area (not only on a geologic time scale, but on a human time scale) having produced a smaller rock fall only ten years ago.

The opening of the East Portal Road will be delayed for the 2008 season until the road can be repaired and it can be determined that the area is safe. Ask at any visitor center for more information and an update on when the road may open.



Ranger Meagan Chaisson standing in front of the huge boulder that smashed East Portal road.

Ranger Programs

Ranger-led activities are a great way to learn about the parks, make lasting connections to the parks or just have that nagging question answered. There are many different types of activities hosted throughout the day during the summer season, from overlook talks, geology talks, boat tours, kids programs, evening slide shows, and astronomy programs. Check with a ranger or at any visitor center for start times and locations.

Astronomy Programs

Many park visitors are amazed at just how many stars they can see on a clear night from the parks. For those visiting from cities or from other countries it could be the first time for many to see the North Star, or the summer triangle of constellations, or our home galaxy, the Milky Way, blazing across the sky from one horizon to the other.

The night sky is a precious resource that we believe all visitors are entitled to experience. That's why this summer the park service will be making an effort to share the sky with visitors in hopes of renewing a connection to the cosmos. We encourage you to get out and enjoy the night.

Astronomy and Stargazing programs will be held at the Elk Creek and South Rim visitor centers throughout the summer. We will also be out during the day with our solar scope designed to look at the sun. Look for us at visitor centers or marinas for this program. Stargazing is weather permitting and can be very cold. Bring warm clothes. Temperatures may dip down as low as 40° F / 4° C!



SEE THE MILKY WAY
UNITED STATES TRAVEL BUREAU

Playing it Safe

Safety may not be on your mind while visiting parks, but it is a very important part of any trip.

- Check with rangers for current information on conditions and potential safety hazards.
- Check weather conditions before starting any activity and be aware that it can change quickly.
- Be informed of hiking and boating regulations and be cautious around all wildlife, water, and steep cliffs.
- Keep young ones close.
- Be bear aware by properly storing all food and items that have come in contact with food.
- Always drink plenty of water.

Searching for Clues in the Mud

What makes a "badland" formation go "bad?" In the Gunnison Gorge NCA it is 135 million years of MUD + RAIN + WIND. The unusual Adobe Badlands along the NCA's western side are composed of highly erosive Mancos Shale, a sedimentary rock that was deposited by an ancient salt sea during the Upper Cretaceous Period and then shaped by wind and water erosion in recent times. Careful searching

in the shale reveals fossils of clams, ammonites (extinct shell fish related to the modern chambered nautilus) and shark teeth.

Even though the soil looks bare, it is actually full of life. Biological soil crusts, usually visible as bumpy, dark-colored soil surfaces, are highly specialized communities of mosses, lichens, and cyanobacteria. They help reduce erosion, increase water retention, improve soil fertility,

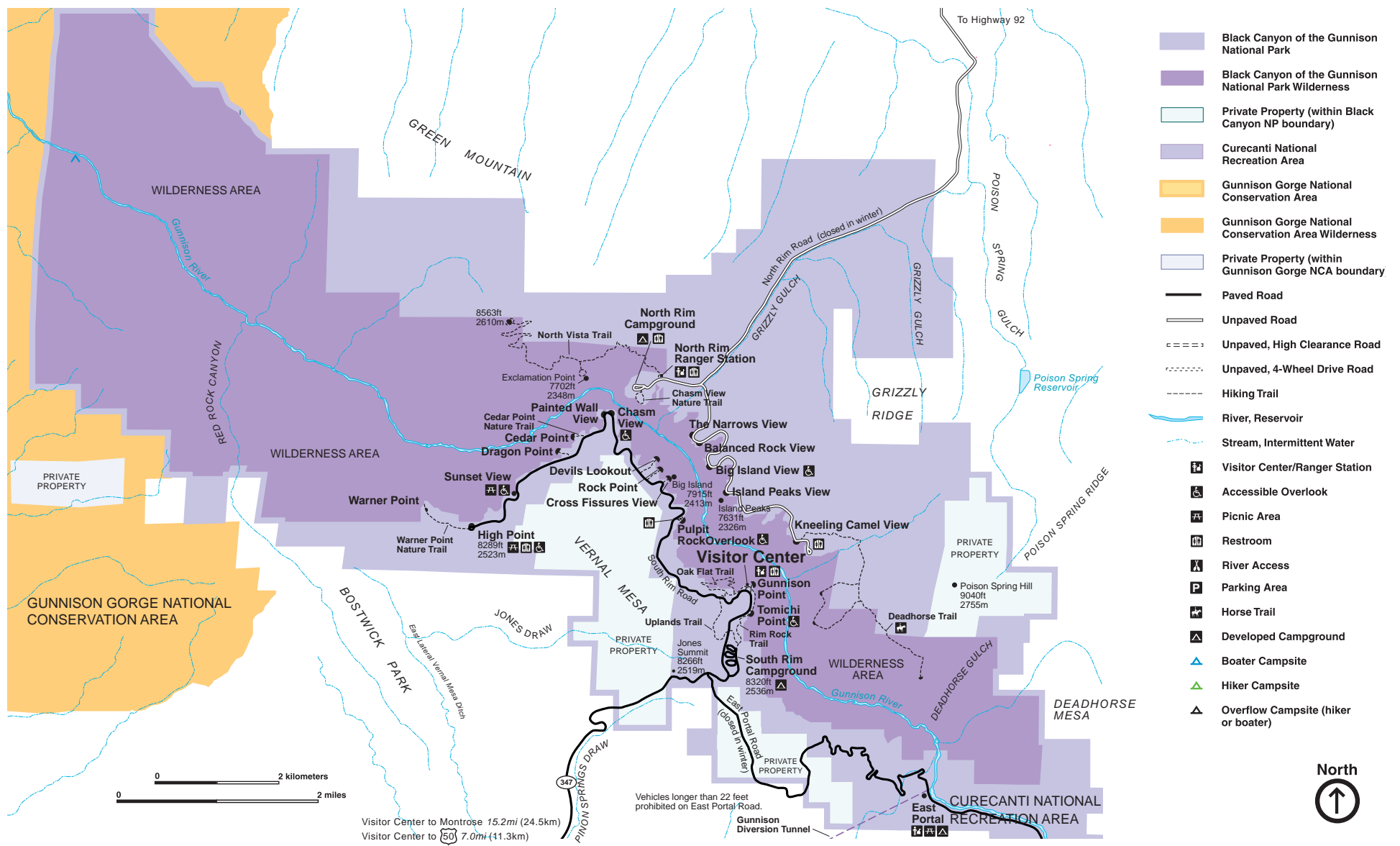
and provide habitat for native plant and animal species, including rare plants such as the endangered clay-loving buckwheat. These soil crusts are fragile, and footprints and tire tracks can undo decades of growth. The BLM and the U.S. Geological Survey conduct numerous research projects in the adobe to find out more about these unique landscapes and determine the best ways to protect and manage them.



Ancient ammonites are occasionally found.

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

The map below is designed for general travel only. It should not be used for trips into the backcountry.

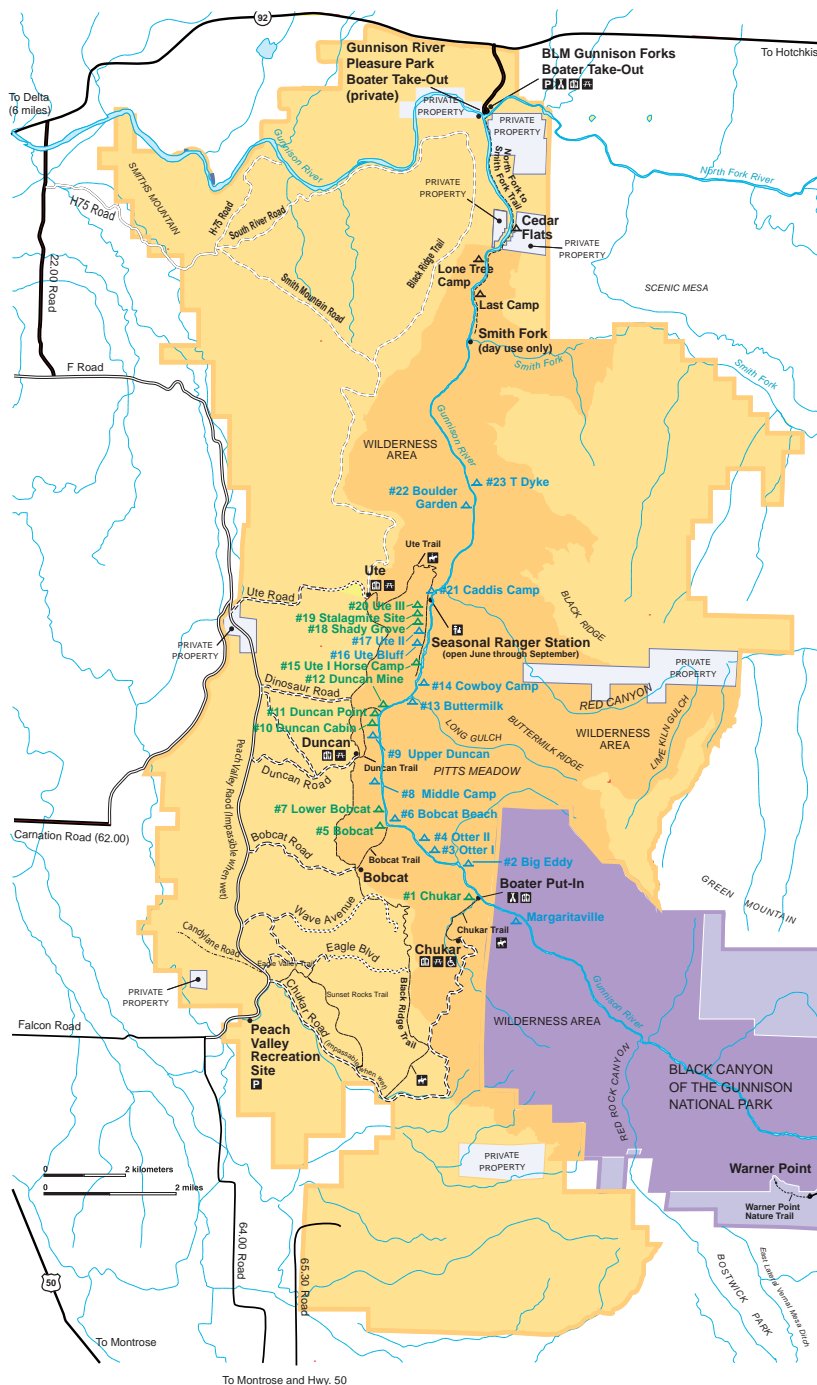


Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area

The map to the right is designed for general travel only. It should not be used for trips into the backcountry.



Inviting canyons and blue-green waters of the Gunnison River draw visitors to hike, raft, and kayak in Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area.



Gunnison Gorge

Areas below the canyon rims from the National Park boundary to two miles north of the Smith Fork confluence are designated as wilderness.

- All wilderness visitors are required to register and pay user fees.
- Camp in designated sites only.
- Maximum group size is 12 people.
- Maximum stay length for all users is two nights. Boaters may only stay one night at any boater campsite.
- Wood fires are prohibited in the wilderness and the entire river corridor to the North Fork confluence.
- Washable, reusable toilet systems are required for all overnight boaters and groups on horseback.
- All trash must be packed out. Strain all dishwater.
- Motorized river craft are prohibited in the wilderness area.
- Mountain bikes and motorized vehicles are prohibited below the canyon rim.
- Commercial operators must carry a copy of their permit while in the gorge.

Boating Information

Black Canyon of the Gunnison

The Gunnison River through the national park is extremely dangerous due to difficult rapids and portages. Even well prepared kayakers will find the canyon challenging. The river is classified as Class V to Unnavigable.

- All boaters must have a U.S. Coast Guard approved whitewater PFD.
- Obtain a backcountry permit at the South Rim Visitor Center or the East Portal bulletin board at the put-in.
- It is wise to go with an experienced kayaker who has been down this stretch of the river before.
- Wood fires are prohibited.
- Pack out everything, including trash, used toilet paper, and cigarette butts.

Curecanti

Blue Mesa Reservoir is the largest water body in Colorado, and combined with Morrow Point and Crystal Reservoirs, offers great recreational opportunities from motor and sail boating, windsurfing, and jet skiing in the summer to snowmobiling and ice fishing in the winter.



Rafting in Gunnison Gorge NCA

Marinas and boat put-ins are located throughout Blue Mesa with easy access to the reservoir. Morrow Point and Crystal Reservoirs are more difficult to access, but many people enjoy kayaking and fishing using small hand-carried crafts.

Check boating and fishing regulations before heading out on the water. These requirements apply to Blue Mesa, Morrow Point and Crystal Reservoirs:

- USCG approved personal flotation devices are required for all on board.
- One Type IV throwable flotation device for boats 16 feet and greater.
- Sound-producing device.
- Lights for dusk to dawn operation.
- A NPS boat permit is required for motorized vessels on Blue Mesa. Fees apply. See website or ask a ranger.
- Motorized vessels must be registered in their home state.
- Fire extinguisher (unless boat is of open construction and less than 26 feet long).
- Boats on Blue Mesa must be certified as mussel free.

Gunnison Gorge

Whitewater enthusiasts will find outstanding scenery and technical (Class II-IV) rapids within Gunnison Gorge Wilderness, which is accessed via the one mile Chukar Trail. You can pack in your own gear or arrange for a horse pack in 970-323-0015.

Looking for calmer waters for your canoe or raft? Launch at the Gunnison Forks or make arrangements with the Gunnison River Pleasure Park 970-872-2525 to jet boat you and your gear four miles upstream to the Smith Fork and enjoy a scenic, leisurely float back. Raft rentals are available; contact the BLM for a list of permitted outfitters.

The following regulations apply to river running in the Gunnison Gorge:

- Boaters must pay fees at the Chukar Trailhead and register at the Chukar boat put-in site.
- All boaters must have a USCG approved whitewater PFD.

- Rafts must carry an extra paddle, first aid kit, repair kit, and extra PFD.
- Portable toilets and stoves or firepans with charcoal are mandatory for overnight boating parties.
- Private motorized crafts prohibited.
- Maximum stay in the wilderness is two nights. Boaters may spend only one night per designated campsite.

Gold Medal Fishing Regulations

These regulations apply from 200 yards downstream of Crystal Dam to the North Fork Confluence.

- Fish with artificial lures and flies only.
- The daily bag limit for brown trout is 4
- The possession limit for brown trout is 8
- All rainbow trout caught must be returned to the water immediately.
- A state fishing license is required.
- Fishing is prohibited within 200 yards downstream of Crystal Dam.

Black Canyon of the Gunnison

South Rim Trails

| | Mileage Round Trip |
|---|-----------------------|
| Rim Rock Trail: An easy rim-hugging hike. | 2 (3 km) |
| Warner Point Trail: Looking for beautiful mountain vistas and canyon views? Then this moderate trail is for you! | 1.5 (2.5 km) |
| Oak Flat Loop Trail: This challenging hike is short but steep. It drops 400 feet through aspen and Douglas-fir. | 2 (3 km) |
| Uplands Trail: This moderate trail winds through the oak brush. Keep a look out for mule deer and other wildlife. | 2 (3 km) |

North Rim Trails

| | |
|--|--------------|
| North Vista Trail: Follow this beautiful but strenuous trail to the summit of Green Mountain. It climbs 840 feet and offers breathtaking views at Exclamation Point. | 7 (11 km) |
| Chasm View Nature Trail: An easy stroll to a view of the narrowest part of the canyon rim. | 0.3 (0.5 km) |
| Deadhorse Trail: This is the only trail open to horses in the park and offers views of Deadhorse Gulch and East Portal. | 5 (9 km) |

Curecanti

| | Mileage Round Trip |
|---|-----------------------|
| Neversink Trail: A wildlife watching trail in the shade. | 1.5 (2.5 km) |
| Mesa Creek Trail: This easy to moderate trail follows a foot bridge over the Gunnison River to view sheer canyon walls. | 1.5 (2.5 km) |
| Crystal Creek Trail: Hike through aspen and oak brush on moderate terrain for ridgetop views of Crystal Reservoir. | 5 (9 km) |
| Dillon Pinnacles Trail: A moderate hike through sagebrush and conifers for a view of one of Curecanti's famous landmarks. | 4 (6.5 km) |
| Pine Creek Trail: This hike descends 232 stairs to the old railroad bed along Pine Creek to Morrow Point Reservoir. | 2 (3 km) |
| Curecanti Creek Trail: This strenuous hike drops 900 feet and includes dramatic views of the 700 foot Curecanti Needle. | 4 (6.5 km) |
| Hermits Rest Trail: For more of a challenge, hike 1800 feet down to Morrow Point Reservoir on this difficult trail. | 6 (10 km) |

Hiking

Black Canyon, Curecanti, and Gunnison Gorge offer a variety of hiking opportunities for all skill levels. Vistas vary from serene creeks, to boulder strewn paths into the canyon, to volcanic pinnacles, to the moonscapes and colorful sandstone of the Gunnison Gorge. Winter offers great opportunities for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing along the rim

of Black Canyon. Whether you are out for the joy of hiking or to launch a raft or kayak, every trail is an adventure.

Remember that routes into the canyon are rugged and wild and unforgiving for the unprepared. Permits are required for backcountry camping. Pets are not allowed on Black Canyon routes into the canyon.

Gunnison Gorge

| | Mileage Round Trip |
|--|-----------------------|
| Chukar Trail: This steep trail descends Chukar Wash and provides floating access and hiking upstream into the National Park. Heavy summer use. | 2.2 (3.5 km) |
| Ute Trail: A lengthy, well-defined trail that descends gradually to the river and offers impressive views of the river, towering cliffs, and the canyon. | 11 (17.5 km) |
| Bobcat Trail: The 1st mile of gradual hiking offers stunning views of the gorge. The final 1/2 mile is very steep and requires some scrambling. | 3 (4.5 km) |
| Duncan Trail: This is similar to the Bobcat trail, but more defined. Offers a gradual descent through pinyon-juniper woodlands, excellent river views and a unique look at the "double canyon" of the gorge. The final descent is extremely steep. This trail is not recommended for horses. | 3 (4.5 km) |
| Eagle Valley Trail: A fun family hike through the adobe badland formations and scenic canyon. Open to mountain bikes, motorcycles and horses. | 2 (3 km) |
| Sunset Rocks Trail: Multiuse single track through colorful adobe formations and pinyon-juniper woodlands. Connects to Eagle Valley Trail. | 6 (10 km) |
| Black Ridge Trail: Multiuse single track until it reaches the Ute Trail from the south. North of the Ute trailhead it is a two track 4WD/OHV trail. | 25 (40 km) |
| West River Trail: This is a moderate single track hiking trail on the west side to the Gunnison River. It provides 3 miles of Gold Medal fishing access on the Gunnison main stem. | 7 (11 km) |

New Watercraft Requirements

Starting Spring 2008 new watercraft requirements are in effect. These requirements are mandatory for Blue Mesa Reservoir and recommended for all other water bodies. Motorboats, sailboats, canoes, kayaks, floats, and windsurf boards are all considered watercraft.

Mussel-Free Certificates will be required for all watercraft entering Blue Mesa Reservoir. An overview of this self-certification process is

explained below. Cleaning stations with water of at least 140 degrees will be established at Elk Creek and Lake Fork Marinas and Stevens Creek Campground. Detailed information is available from the Curecanti web page (www.nps.gov/cure) or any park visitor center. Certificates should be placed in the dashboard of automobiles while on the water and can be printed out from the webpage or can be picked up at the visitor center once requirements are met.



Mussel Drying Times

The invasive Zebra and Quagga mussels can survive out of the water for several days to over a month depending on temperature and humidity conditions. If your watercraft has the potential to host aquatic hitchhikers, use this table to determine minimum safe drying times.

COLORADO

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| April | 32 days |
| May-June | 13 days |
| July- Aug | 8 days |
| September | 13 days |
| October | 21 days |

OTHER STATES

varies

For winter or nationwide drying time, see <http://www.100thmeridian.org/emersion.asp> or contact the park visitor center.

START HERE

Has it been **more than 30 days** since your watercraft was used?



You are ready to launch!
Place your signed certificate on your vehicle dashboard.



Was your watercraft and trailer thoroughly washed, drained, flushed, and **allowed to dry** for at least the time indicated (see table)?



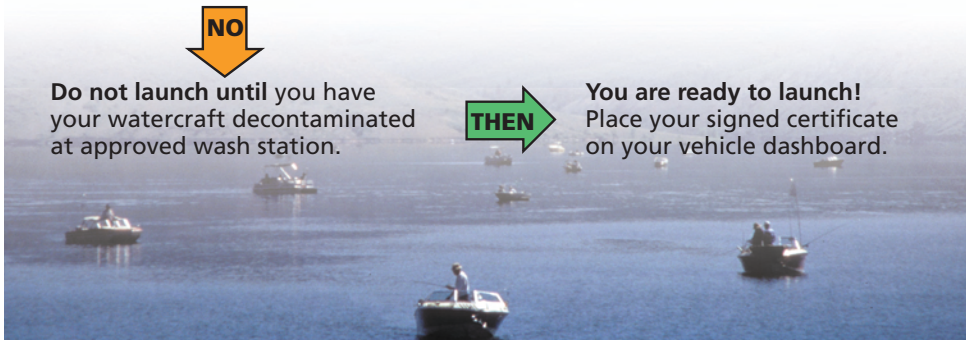
You are ready to launch!
Place your signed certificate on your vehicle dashboard.



Do not launch until you have your watercraft decontaminated at approved wash station.



You are ready to launch!
Place your signed certificate on your vehicle dashboard.



Black Canyon Backcountry Regulations

Backcountry travel is a rewarding and unique experience, but only for the prepared. Remember that the inner canyon within Black Canyon National Park is rugged and remote.

- Permits (at no charge) are required for ALL inner canyon use.
- Reservations are required for Red Rock Canyon. Reservations for 2008 are full.
- Pets are prohibited in the Wilderness area and on all inner canyon routes.
- Hunting and possession of firearms are prohibited.
- A valid Colorado fishing license is required. Gold Medal Water regulations apply (See page 6).
- Collecting anything within the National Park is prohibited, including wood, flowers, plants, animals, antlers, historical artifacts, and/or rocks.
- Follow "Leave No Trace" ethics.
- Use pit toilets if available. If not, bury human waste six inches deep and away from the river. You can also use travel toilets which are available for purchase at the South Rim Visitor Center.
- Wood fires are prohibited. Use only camp stoves for cooking.
- Carry the "ten essentials" plus extra food, clothing, and a water filter.

Climbing

There are a number of technical climbing routes in the Black Canyon. Most climbs are long, multipitch routes and are not for novice climbers. Access is difficult, but with the right amount of skill and preparation, climbing in the canyon can be a rewarding adventure. Free backcountry permits are required.

For those interested in something that stays a little closer to the ground, there are a number of bouldering problems in the park. Check with rangers for more information.

Adventures by Car

PAVED ROAD TOURS

The South Rim Drive offers beautiful views of Black Canyon. Some of the 12 viewpoints are right on the road and others involve short strolls on well maintained trails.

Scenic sections of U.S. Highway 50 are adjacent to Blue Mesa Reservoir. A short detour to Cimarron will take you to railroad exhibits and to a view of Morrow Point Dam. Continuing on Highway 50 offers views of unique geologic formations and panoramas of surrounding mountains.

For views of Morrow Point Reservoir, turn onto Highway 92 at Lake Fork towards Black Canyon's North Rim. This drive offers dizzying views.

UNPAVED ROADS

The North Rim Drive is a road less traveled. Many prefer the relative solitude that this drive offers. It is a gravel road open generally from late March through mid November, depending on the weather. The North Rim Drive offers 6 stunning overlooks.

Horseback Riding and Biking

Saddle up your horse or mountain bike and head to the Gunnison Gorge for scenic riding through adobe badlands and pinyon-juniper woodlands. Take in spectacular views from the Black Ridge Trail or Smith Mountain jeep roads. Riders may want to take their fishing poles on the 4.5 mile Ute Trail to the river. The Bobcat and Duncan trails are not horse-friendly due to very steep drop-off areas. Mountain bikes are not permitted within the Wilderness but there are plenty of other great riding areas from which to choose.

Curecanti is surrounded by US Forest Service land which offers many off highway driving adventures suitable for SUVs and OHVs. Ask a ranger for more information. Driving off designated routes is prohibited.

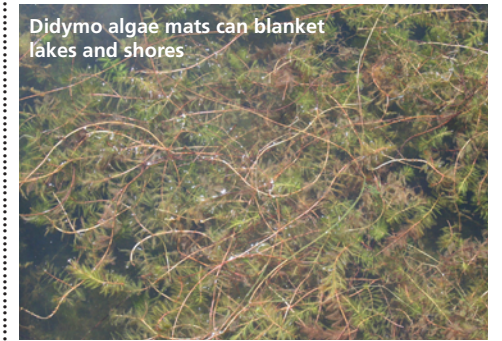
Driving in the Gunnison Gorge can be a great adventure. Take a drive through scenic adobe badland formations along Peach Valley Road or enjoy beautiful river views while looking for that fishing spot along South River Road. Check out spectacular views of the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness from the Smith Mountain jeep road.

OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLES

Unload OHVs at the Gunnison Gorge Peach Valley Recreation Site and ride over 75 miles of designated motorcycle single track and ATV trails within the 9,800 acre Flat Top-Peach Valley OHV Recreation Area. The area offers two OHV play areas, one at Falcon Road and one at Flat Top, for cross-country riding. Check out trailhead kiosks for trails and riding regulations.

Personal Gear Cleaning

Don't have a watercraft? You too can be a victim of an aquatic hitchhiker. Anyone who spends time in the water can do their part to prevent invasive species by following these guidelines for cleaning personal gear.



Didymo algae mats can blanket lakes and shores

Didymo Algae Prevention

Soak and scrub all items for times listed in one of the following solutions:

- Very hot water kept above 113 °F/ 43°C (hotter than tap water) for at least 20 minutes (not advised for Gore-Tex);
OR
A 2% solution of bleach, salt, or dishwashing liquid for 20 minutes.

Absorbent items such as felt-soled waders require longer soaking times:

- At least 40 minutes in hot water kept above 113 °F/ 43°C;

Completely dry equipment if you cannot clean it adequately; it must be totally dry for 48 hours to eradicate didymo cells which can survive months in slightly moist conditions.



New Zealand Mudsnaill

New Zealand Mudsnaill

Physical Treatment:

- Freeze your gear for a minimum of 4 hours to kill all mudsnails. Must be below 26°F (-3°C).
OR
Soak gear in a bath of hot water (at least 120°F, 46°C) for 5 minutes. This method is not advised for Gore-Tex.
- Dry gear for at least 48 hours before reuse. Remove all pockets of dampness, insure that boots are totally dry.

Chemical Treatment:

Alternatively, gear should be soaked in the following solution for 5 minutes and then rinsed thoroughly with tap water, away from the water body.

- Commercial solution Formula 409® Cleaner Degreaser Disinfectant 50% with water.

Cimarron: A Treasure Trove of History

Remember the childhood feeling of discovering your first model railroad? The railroad set with a complete layout of track, locomotive, freight cars and the caboose? Now, imagine the model train set running through the Black Canyon with its winter snow, numbing cold and fearsome avalanches, the raging Gunnison River and the ever present and forbidding 1,700 foot high walls of solid rock.

You can relive this setting at Cimarron, where the Curecanti National Recreation Area features a lesser known attraction, a historic railroad exhibit. The exhibit showcases an 1882 Baldwin narrow gauge engine with coal tender, boxcar, and – yes – a historically accurate caboose. There is also a campground, fishing, and the Morrow Point Dam for viewing.

The year is 1882 and the race is on to build a railroad through Colorado's mountains with their promised riches of gold and silver. General William Jackson Palmer's Denver & Rio Grande Railroad has reached Gunnison. Palmer, Colorado's own railroad baron, has plans to extend his narrow gauge west, but many obstacles stand in his way, including the Black Canyon.

Black Canyon is widely considered

impenetrable. Undaunted, Palmer builds his "Scenic Line of the World" through the canyon as far as the Cimarron River, where the tracks emerge to head up and over Cerro Summit, and onward to Montrose. Cerro Summit presents its own challenges. It takes three engines to pull a freight train up and over the nearly 8,000 foot Cerro Summit; two are required to pull a passenger train. Palmer's dreams require a location to hook the engines together. Along the Cimarron River a roundhouse is constructed and the hamlet of Cimarron is born. In its beginning, Cimarron possessed a general store, several eating establishments, a dance hall and 11 saloons!

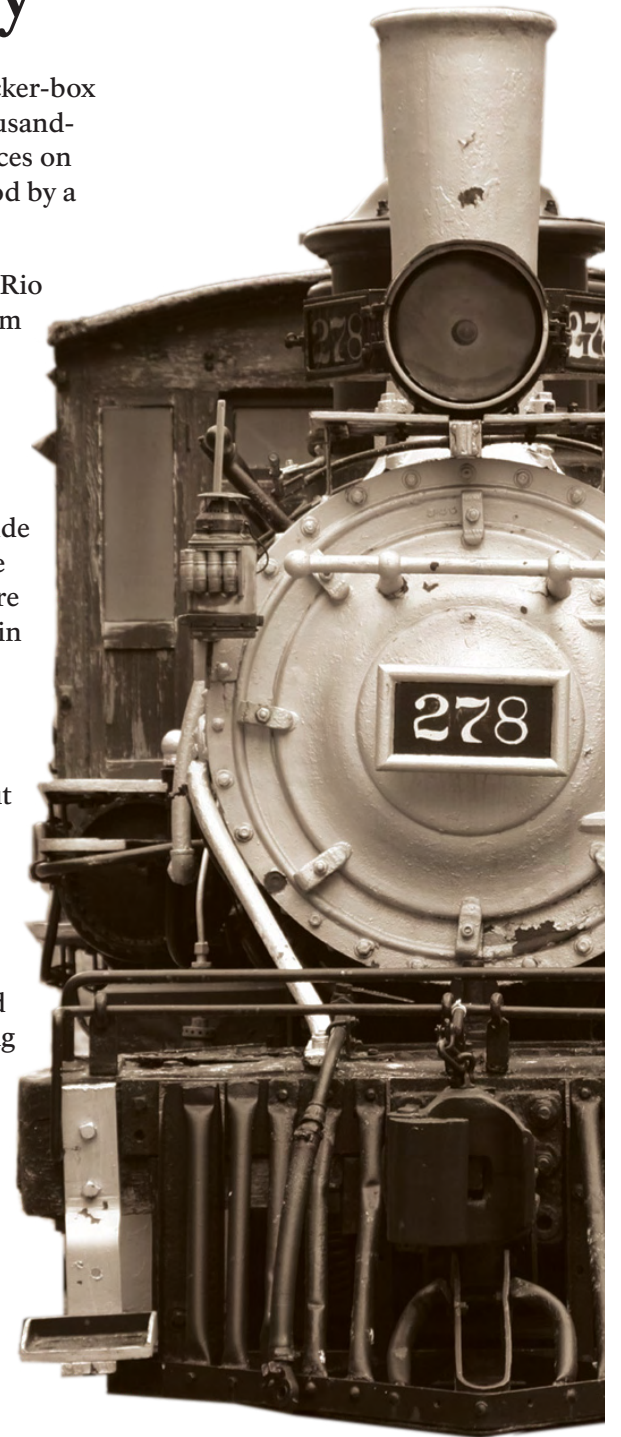
Troubles plague the Black Canyon route, between 1898 and 1934 there are several major accidents along the line. Trains are knocked from the tracks by avalanches, house-size boulders, and a speedy engineer driving too fast!

Lewis Lathrop, in 1884, described it best, "The Black Canyon... became a railroader's hell. The almost perpendicular mountains, particularly the north slopes, began avalanching great snow slides down over the track and into the river... Imagine these tiny narrow gauge trains, a snorting little eight wheeled locomotive on the head

end, dragging four or five cracker-box coaches through that two thousand-foot-deep chasm, taking chances on being smashed into matchwood by a thundering snow slide."

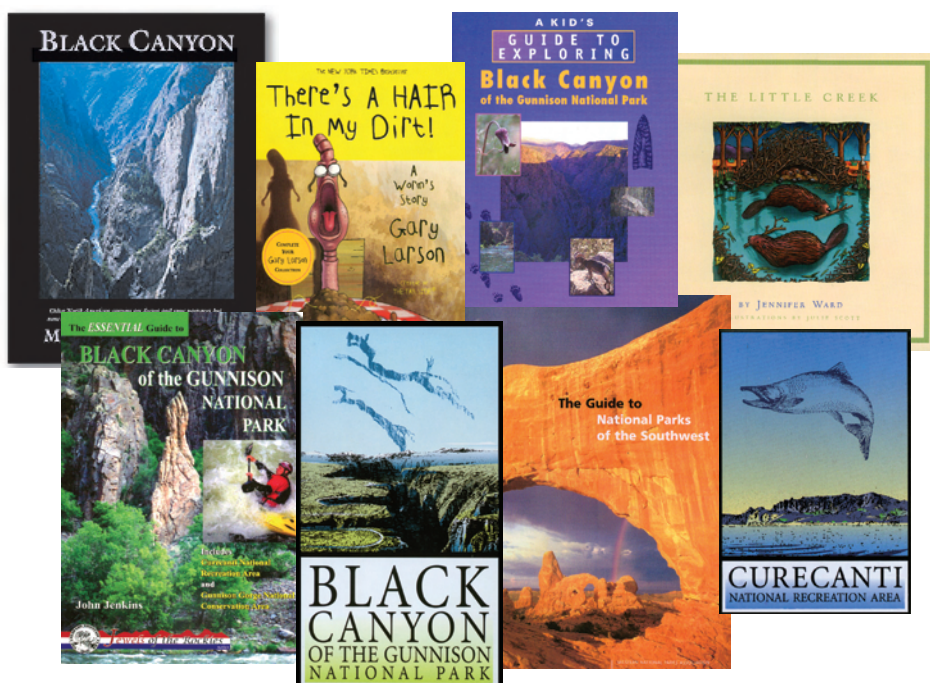
The peanut whistle of the last Rio Grande train reverberated from the walls of Black Canyon on Memorial Day, 1949. Today, the railroad bed is covered by the water of Morrow Point Reservoir. However, all is not forgotten, Denver & Rio Grande and Western RR narrow gauge Locomotive 278 and its cars are displayed on a historic trestle in the Cimarron River.

The weather has been tough on the locomotive and cars, and restoration is planned. But Engine 278 and the cars will not be removed until after this summer. During your visit to Curecanti, plan to see the train and the Cimarron Visitor Center with its railroad exhibit and memorabilia. Bring your family and relive the dreams of Colorado railroad towns, rail passage through Black Canyon and the era of the narrow gauge trains.



WESTERN NATIONAL PARKS ASSOCIATION

Western National Parks Association is a non-profit membership organization that promotes the preservation of the National Park Service and its resources by creating greater public appreciation through education, interpretation, and research. WNPA operates bookstores within more than 70 park sites in the American southwest. They have contributed more than \$37 million to the park service, generated through store sales and member support. WNPA supports parks by producing more than half a million free interpretive items each year, such as this park newspaper. Visit our bookstore in person or online at www.nps.gov/blca or www.nps.gov/cure. Call us at 970-249-1914 ext. 423.



Volunteers in Parks

Volunteers for the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management tirelessly put in thousands of hours each year helping to keep our public lands afloat.

When we think about volunteering, most of us would think of campground hosts or working at a visitor center. However, there are many ways that each of us can contribute to our parks.

In the summer of 2006, Black Canyon launched its Volunteer Climbing Ranger Program. The program consisted of 9 volunteers who were not only skilled climbers trained in high angle rescue, but also paramedics, EMT's, first responders, and rescuers.

Since 2006 these 9 volunteers have logged thousands of hours conducting climbing patrols, patrolling backcountry routes, cleaning up backcountry campsites, and attending search and rescue training.

Volunteers wishing to lend their skills on the water, Gunnison Gorge also offers unique volunteer opportunities.

Volunteers get to enjoy the beauty of the gorge while assisting BLM river rangers with river patrols and resource projects on a two-day work patrol, rafting 14 miles of the Gunnison River from the Chukar Trail to the Gunnison Forks. Volunteers have assisted with tamarisk removal, building trails, planting trees, cleaning campsites, and monitoring wildlife. Volunteers must be physically fit to participate. The work is strenuous, but rewarding.

Our parks and public lands are grateful to all of the volunteers who generously donate their time and skills in visitor centers, on the river, and on the rocks to help protect resources and visitors.

If you are interested in volunteering at any of the three areas, please give us a call. For Black Canyon or Curecanti, contact Liz McConnell at 970- 641-2337 ext. 229.

For volunteer opportunities in Gunnison Gorge contact Julie Stotler or Kevin Cohenour at 970-240-5300.



Volunteer climbing rangers train for real life emergencies on the edge of the Black Canyon.