National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Canyonlands National Park
Utah

Canyonlands
Long-Range Interpretive Plan

Canyon Country Outdoor Education field trip to Mesa Arch

Canyonlands
Long-Range Interpretive Plan

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Prepared by the Division of Interpretive Planning
Harpers Ferry Center
National Park Service

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Opposite: Sandstone spires in Chesler Park, Needles District.

Next Page: The Colorado River in Cataract Canyon.

Contents Page: Common raven.

Contents

Introduction

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canyonlands National Park has an excellent interpretation and education program. Visitors enjoy quality services that meet diverse needs and promote sustainable experiences. In order to maintain and even increase this high level of quality, a variety of actions are recommended over the next 5-10 years. Chief among them are:

- Expand and renovate the Island in the Sky Visitor Center
- Explore options for additional visitor amenities at Island in the Sky
- Improve services for "windshield visitors" (those staying for just a few hours) in the Needles District; this includes front-end research
- Reduce the numbers of different signs at trailheads; improve appearance and effectiveness of signs
- Install new wayside exhibits at several locations in and around the park
- Seek ways to augment personal services capacity, including staffing increases
- Increase staff involvement with the Maze District. Provide professional expertise and oversight of interpretive activities.

PURPOSE

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP):

- Describes goals and issues for visitor experience, interpretation, education, and resource stewardship
- Recommends ways to achieve those goals and address the issues through facilities, interpretive media and programs, and access to resources and experiences
- Provides relevant background information
- This is a long-range plan, spanning from 7 to 10 years. It will join an Annual Interpretive Plan (AIP) and an Interpretive Database to make up a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) for Canyonlands National Park. Intended audiences for this LRIP include park staff, interpretive media and facility designers, partners, and regional office staff.
- This plan is congruent with other park plans, including the Canyonlands Strategic Plan, Resource Management Plan, Backcountry Management Plan, and River Management Plan.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Work on this plan began with a 3-day scoping workshop in July, 1998 in Moab, UT; the workshop included Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, which are part of the Southeast Utah Group (SEUG). Participants included SEUG staff, regional staff, Canyonlands Natural History Association (CNHA) staff, other partners, and the facilitator/interpretive planner from Harpers Ferry Center.

At a second workshop in October, 1998, participants drafted themes and goals, formally assessed current conditions, and began discussing recommendations. SEUG staff met with the interpretive planner in November, 1999 to finalize recommendations and other details. Progress on the Canyonlands plan was delayed pending completion of the Arches LRIP. Another workshop was held in the park in May, 2000. A final workshop was held November 27-29, 2001.

The goals and recommendations in this plan represent a consensus of those involved in the planning process.

Opposite: Hiking in the canyons of the Maze.

Foundation For Planning

PARK PURPOSE

The park purpose is the reason why Congress set the area aside for protection as a unit of the national park system. The Park was established

"…to preserve an area in the State of Utah possessing superlative scenic, scientific, and archeological features for the inspiration, benefit, and use of the public. "

Public Law 88-590, September 12, 1964

PARK SIGNIFICANCE

Park significance statements tell why the park is special and deserves to be a part of the national park system. Statements of significance clearly define the importance of the park's resources as they relate to the park purpose. These statements help set resource protection priorities, identify primary interpretive themes, and develop desirable visitor experiences.

Unique to this vast, contiguous expanse of parkland is an assemblage of striking geologic features, such as multiple and varying rock layers, arches, cliffs, canyons, towers, spires and other formations.

The park provides incomparable opportunities to view this colorful, geologically significant wilderness from various perspectives.

The park's backcountry regions provide opportunities to experience various degrees of solitude, connection to wilderness resources, and personal challenge.

The park preserves an intact remnant of the Colorado Plateau's high desert ecosystem.

The park contains evidence of prehistoric and historic cultures and conditions of existence, including world-class archaeological sites and properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The park is inseparable from a complex of parks and other public lands; this complex provides a wide range of nearby visitor experiences and activities.

As one of the 10 Colorado Plateau parks, Canyonlands provides important research opportunities for studying protected ecosystems and environmental change over long periods of time.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS

Visitor experience goals describe what experiences (cognitive, emotional, active, and sensory) are important for visitors to Canyonlands National Park (NP). These goals provide direction for the design of visitor facilities and services, interpretive media and programs, and partnerships.

Visitors will have access to interpretive facilities, media, and services that will:

- Help them meet their personal goals in visiting Canyonlands NP.
- Increase their awareness of the experiences and opportunities available to them.
- Inform them of methods, locations, and opportunities to experience solitude, natural sounds, long-range views, and a feeling of wilderness.
- Present Canyonlands NP within the context of the National Park System.
- Expand their knowledge and appreciation of
  - geologic processes, and enhance their ability to identify geologic formations.
  - plant and animal communities of the Colorado Plateau.
  - prehistoric and historic resources within Canyonlands.
  - desert safety and resource protection issues.
  - minimum impact ethics and methods
  - NPS policies, rules, regulations
- Increase their willingness and ability to incorporate that knowledge and appreciation into their conduct and actions while visiting Canyonlands NP.
- Visitors will have the opportunity to safely participate with minimum impact in the many recreational opportunities available at Canyonlands NP (e.g. hiking, climbing, 2W and 4W driving, bicycling, rafting, kayaking, backpacking, night sky gazing, viewing archeological sites, auto sightseeing, picnicking, and camping).
- Visitors will receive accurate and consistent information from a variety of sources, including all park staff, partners, outfitters, concessioners, and Internet sites.

Opposite: Mountain biking on the White Rim Road.

Geology talk at Grand View Point

Interpretive Themes

Primary interpretive themes are summary statements of those ideas, concepts, and stories that are central to the nature and significance of the park. Themes will be communicated with the most effective and appropriate methods. Visitors will have access to a variety of means of learning about – connecting with – the meanings identified by the primary themes.

Geology

Canyonlands NP is a place of geologic order. Layers of rock have systematically recorded chapters of the area's geologic and biotic past.

Geologic Change

Water and gravity are the forces of erosion primarily responsible for sculpting the rock layers found in Canyonlands NP into a dramatic and colorful landscape of canyons, mesas, buttes, fins, arches, spires, and other geologic formations.

Wilderness

Traveling into the backcountry of Canyonlands NP can provide an opportunity for solitude in a location where natural systems and the feeling of wilderness predominate.

Desert Ecology

Canyonlands NP preserves a desert environment where the interlocking parts of a rich fabric of geology, climate, and living organisms can be studied and enjoyed. It is a land of contrast and intensity where plant and animal life is diverse, if not obvious.

Prehistoric Cultural Resources

Petroglyphs, pictographs, granaries, towers, pottery, tools, and other traces of ancestral Puebloans are found throughout the park. Preservation of these artifacts and the contexts in which they are found are critical to understanding and fully appreciating the lifestyle and living conditions experienced by prehistoric peoples.

Historic Cultural Resources

Evidence of historic explorations, land uses, inhabitants, and philosophies are apparent throughout the park. This evidence provides a link to past lifestyles and conditions of existence. Its preservation is critical to understanding and fully appreciating how the area's human history has influenced present conditions.

Issues and Influences

VISITOR EXPERIENCE ISSUES

Accessibility

Universal accessibility – including both physical and programmatic access – is a primary goal and continuing initiative. The National Park Service strives to provide optimum access to the maximum number of people possible; this includes access beyond that required by law.

Substantial attention has been given to making park facilities, programs, and experiences accessible. The rugged terrain encountered in this park makes many areas and experiences difficult to access, especially for disabled and elderly visitors. Interpretive media can provide alternative methods of experiencing the park. Another issue is the accessibility of the park to audiences with little previous access (e.g., ethnic and socioeconomic minorities). Many minorities live in cities that are distant from the park.

Safety

Park visitors may encounter rugged terrain, slippery sandstone, lightning storms, and turbulent whitewater which can cause accidents, injuries and occasional fatalities. Effective education enables visitors to safely enjoy these resources.

Several factors make safety education a difficult task. Some visitors may enjoy and seek dangerous experiences. Modifying behavior through communication is inherently difficult. Although repetition is often useful in effective communication, there may be message saturation with resulting lack of attention. Many effective safety messages should be delivered at the points of key decisions, which may be in remote areas with no interpretive media or personnel.

Front Country Access

Much of the park is roadless, or accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles, bicycles, rafts, horseback, or hiking. Visitors who are unable or unwilling to use these methods of transportation have limited access to some spectacular landscapes. This is especially an issue in the Needles District, where visitors may drive long distances to find that access by paved road is limited. Even a scenic view of The Needles can be difficult to find.

Oversight of Interpretation and Education

The Park Service and several concessioners provide interpretation and education services. The Park Service is responsible for the quality and consistency of all interpretation and education in the park. This is provided primarily through training and program monitoring. However, the need often exceeds available staff.

Commerical trip in Cataract Canyon

Grand County fifth graders learn about air quality at the Island in the Sky air quality monitoring station.

VISITOR-RELATED RESOURCE PROTECTION ISSUES

Positive and Negative Impacts

Park visitors and neighbors impact park resources both positively and negatively. Visitor use can exacerbate harmful resource impacts. Off-road travel by motor vehicles and bicycles, and the use of social trails by hikers causes erosion and damages vegetation. Theft and graffiti damage archaeological sites. Overcrowding can cause negative impacts to park resources and visitors, especially at scenic viewpoints, on trails, at parking areas, and in facilities.

Conversely, positive visitor use can enhance enjoyment and increase public support for resource protection. Public understanding, appreciation, and support of park goals and the agency mission are vital to the success of park operations.

Resource Management Programs

Park programs such as backcountry and river management plans, bighorn sheep transplanting, exotic species removal, recreation fee demonstration, wilderness designation, and use of alternative energy sources may not be well understood by the public. Quality interpretation and education programs in the park and in neighboring communities are required to minimize deleterious impacts and augment public support.

Water Quality

Water quality can be affected by industrial, commercial, and other activities near the park, and by activities in the park. Activities in the park include vehicular traffic in or near riparian areas, and transport of exotic species to riparian areas.

Air Quality

Air quality is a major issue, with pollution coming from power plants on the Colorado Plateau and from major metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles. Canyonlands has traditionally relied on distance from major areas to preserve both vistas and clean air; this may no longer be sufficient.

Natural Sounds

Natural sounds are just beginning to be recognized as a park resource; overflights, primarily

Top: Colorado Boy Scouts assist with graffiti removal at the Squaw Flat Campground.

Above: Alternative energy at Hans Flat, gateway to the Maze District.

Below: Needles visitors gaze through a telescope at an evening program about the night sky.

from sightseeing aircraft, can impact this resource significantly. Park management activities (e.g., use of helicopters) can also affect this resource.

Night Sky

A dark night sky is an important park resource. Distance from developed areas has helped preserve dark night skies, but encroaching development and indiscriminate night lighting are threats. Lighting in the park (facilities, campgrounds) also can obscure a dark sky.

Resource extraction and economic development

Economic activities near the park can have positive and negative impacts to park resources. Access to previously inaccessible or little-used areas may increase. Night sky and natural quiet zones can be affected. Wildlife can be disturbed, habitats degraded or converted to human uses, and migration routes interrupted. Exotic species and diseases may be introduced. Viewsheds may be disrupted.

Positive impacts can include increased tax revenues, which can support actions such as environmental protection and land use planning. Standard of living tends to be positively correlated with involvement in low-impact outdoor recreation.

Actions of Other Agencies

Issues include policies and actions regarding cattle trespass (when parklands are not fenced), off-road vehicle use, Revised Statute 2477 regarding highway rights-of-way and promotion of previously less accessible areas.

Protection of archeological/paleontological sites

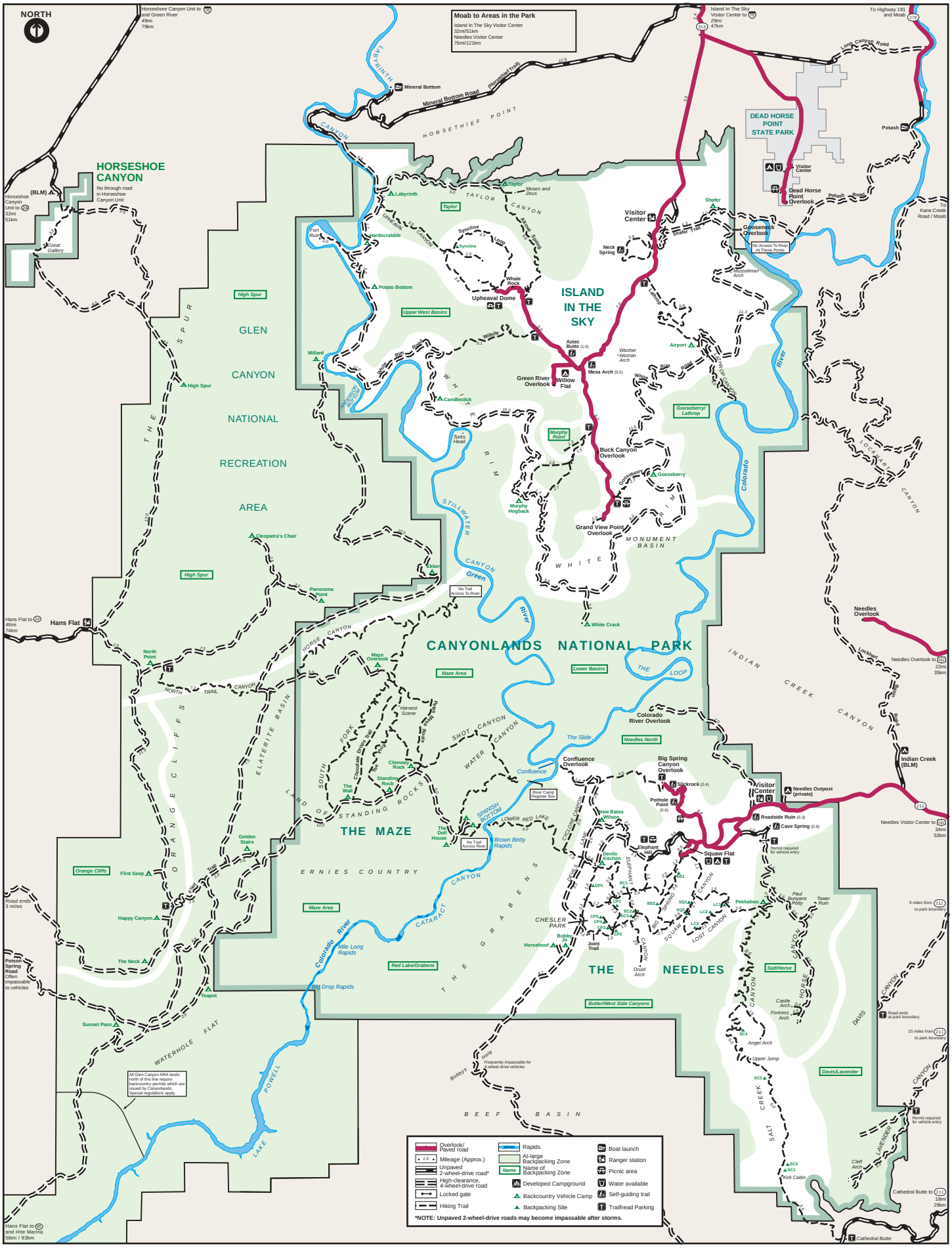
Removal or alteration of archeological and paleontological resources destroys the integrity of these sites. Valuable information relating to context and provenience is lost. Park visitors and neighbors must learn that artifacts and fossils are part of our national heritage and must be respected.

Graffiti

The defacing of natural and cultural objects within the park by marking or etching adversely impacts resources and visitor experience.

Exotic species and exotic species management

Nonnative species of plants and animals are living inside park boundaries. They compete with native species for habitat. Exotic species alter desert ecology as well as the appearance of the landscape.


NORTH
Moab to Areas in the Park
Island In The Sky Visitor Center 32mi/51km
Needles Visitor Center 76mi/121km
HORSESHOE CANYON
No through road in Horseshoe Canyon Unit
Horseshoe Canyon Unit to (24) 32mi 51km
(BLM)
Great Gallery
Horseshoe Canyon Unit to and Green River 49mi 79km
THE GLEN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
High Spur
Cleopatra's Chair
Panorama Point
Hans Flat
Hans Flat to (24) 46mi 74km
Hans Flat to (95) and Hite Marina 58mi / 93km
Mineral Bottom
Mineral Bottom Road
Horsethief Trail
HORSETHIEF POINT
LABYRINTH CANYON
Labyrinth
Taylor
Moses and Zeus
TAYLOR CANYON
Hardscrabble
Fort Ruin
Syncline
Loop
Potato Bottom
Upheaval Dome
Upper West Basins
Millard
White Rim Road
WHITE RIM
Candlestick
Turks Head
Murphy Point
Murphy Hogback
Buck Canyon Overlook
Gooseberry
Gooseberry/Lathrop
Grand View Point Overlook
MONUMENT BASIN
WHITE RIM
Stillwater Canyon
Green River
No Trail Access To River
White Crack
Maze Overlook
Maze Area
North Point
North Trail
Horse Canyon
ORANGE CLIFFS
ELATERITE BASIN
Orange Cliffs
Flint Seep
Golden Stairs
Road ends 3 miles
Happy Canyon
The Neck
Teapot
Poison Spring Road Often impassable to vehicles
Sunset Pass
WATERHOLE FLAT
All Glen Canyon NRA lands north of this line require backcountry permits which are issued by Canyonlands. Special regulations apply.
LAKE POWELL
Harvest Scene
Maze Maze Maze
Chocolate Drops Trail
Chimney Rock
Standing Rock
The Wall
LAND OF STANDING ROCKS
SOUTH FORK SHOT CANYON
WATER CANYON
THE MAZE
ERNIES COUNTRY
The Doll House
Golden Stairs
Brown Betty Rapids
SPANISH BOTTOM
LOWER RED LAKE
River Camp Register Box
Confluence
Confluence Overlook
The Slide
Needles North
Colorado River Overlook
Lower Basins
THE LOOP
CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK
Colorado River
Green River
Island In The Sky Visitor Center to (313) 29mi 47km
To Highway 191 and Moab (279)
Long Canyon Road
DEAD HORSE POINT STATE PARK
Visitor Center
Dead Horse Point Overlook
Potash
Potash Road
To Kane Creek Road / Moab
Shafer
Shafer Trail
Gooseneck Overlook
No Access To River At These Points
Neck Spring
Musselman Arch
ISLAND IN THE SKY
Upheaval Dome
Whale Rock
Lathrop
Aztec Butte (1.0)
Mesa Arch (0.5)
Washer Woman Arch
Airport
Green River Overlook
Willow Flat
White Rim Road
Gooseberry/Lathrop
Needles Overlook
Needles Overlook to (211) 22mi 35mi
Lockhart Basin
INDIAN CREEK CANYON
Indian Creek (BLM)
Needles Outpost (private)
Needles Visitor Center to (211) 34mi 53mi
Visitor Center
Roadside Ruin (0.3)
Cave Spring (0.6)
Permit required for vehicle entry
Big Spring Canyon Overlook
Slickrock (2.4)
Pothole Point (0.6)
Squaw Flat
Elephant Hill
Devils Kitchen
Chesler Park
CHESLER PARK
Joint Trail
Horsehoof
Bobbin Jo
Red Lake/Grabens
Mile Long Rapids
Big Drop Rapids
Colorado River
CATARACT CANYON
THE GRABENS
THE NEEDLES
Druid Arch
Peekaboo
Paul Bunyans Potty
Tower Ruin
LOST CANYON
SQUAW CANYON
SPRING CANYON
Salt/Horse
HORSE CANYON
Castle Arch
Fortress Arch
Angel Arch
Upper Jump
Butler/West Side Canyons
Davis/Lavender
DAVIS CANYON
SALT CREEK
LAVENDER CANYON
Road ends at park boundary
15 miles from (211) to park boundary
9 miles from (211) to park boundary
Permit required for vehicle entry
Cleft Arch
York Cabin
Cathedral Butte to (211) 18mi 29mi
Cathedral Butte
BEEF BASIN
Bobbys Hole
Frequently impassable for 4-wheel-drive vehicles
Overlook/ Paved road
Mileage (Approx.)
Unpaved 2-wheel-drive road*
High-clearance, 4-wheel-drive road
Locked gate
Hiking Trail
Rapids
At-large Backpacking Zone
Name of Backpacking Zone
Developed Campground
Backcountry Vehicle Camp
Backpacking Site
Boat launch
Ranger station
Picnic area
Water available
Self-guiding trail
Trailhead Parking
*NOTE: Unpaved 2-wheel-drive roads may become impassable after storms.

The Resource

Region

Canyonlands is in southeastern Utah, on the Colorado Plateau. The area is mostly high desert characterized by eroded sandstones. It is rugged and spectacular country. Summers are hot and dry. Winters can be cold with occasional snow. Spring and fall are usually quite pleasant.

Most visitors arrive by automobile from the north or south. Interstate Highway 70 runs east and west, about 50 miles north of the park. Many visitors take Highway 191 south from I-70 and in about 25 miles turn west on Highway 313 to reach the park (an additional 20 miles) to the Island in the Sky District. From the south visitors come north on 191 and turn west on Highway 211 to reach the Needles District. In both cases, visitors can get to the park without stopping first in Moab, where the area's primary orientation center – the Moab Information Center (MIC) -- is located. Secondary orientation centers are located in Blanding and Monticello.

The Park

Canyonlands National Park was established in 1964. It presently encompasses about 527 square miles. The confluence of the Colorado and Green Rivers lies within the park. The rivers divide the park into four districts: the Island in the Sky, the Needles, the Maze and the rivers themselves. While the districts share a primitive desert atmosphere, each retains its own character and offers different opportunities for exploration and encounters with natural and cultural history. The four districts are not directly linked by any roads, so travel between them requires two to six hours by car. Generally, people find it impractical to visit more than one or two districts in a single trip.

ISLAND IN THE SKY

The Island in the Sky sits between two great rivers, the Green and the Colorado, and forms the northern and most-visited region of the park. It is a broad, nearly level mesa that descends about 1200 feet to a sandstone bench known as the White Rim, and from there 1000 feet to the rivers. From the Island visitors can look down on the rivers and upon much of the rest of the park. Every overlook offers a different perspective on Canyonlands' spectacular landscape. The mesa top is accessible by automobile and foot; and the White Rim is traversed by splendid mountain bike, four-wheel-drive, and hiking trails.

Utah Highway 313 leads to the Island district. The intersection with US Highway 191 is 10 mi/16 km north of Moab, or 22 mi/35 km south of I-70. Some travelers on 191 from the north are tempted to take 313 into the Island before continuing south to Moab and the comprehensive information available at the Moab Information Center. There is a small kiosk at the intersection of 191 and 313 which gives people a good orientation with several wayside panels. Even if they pass that, the scenery is spectacular, and much of the front-country Canyonlands experience is accessible in the Island district. The distance on 313 into the district is about 22 mi/35 km. The visitor center is located just inside the park boundary, and several sites farther along the road provide great sightseeing and hiking as well as more challenging experiences. Driving time to the visitor center from Moab is roughly 40 minutes.

The Island in the Sky Visitor Center is open year-round from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (except some winter holidays), with extended hours March through October. Exhibits, information and publications are available.

Willow Flat Campground is open year-round on a first-come, first-served basis. There are twelve sites with tables, fire grills and vault toilets. Firewood and water are not available.

White Rim Road

The 100-mile White Rim Road loops around and below the Island mesa top and provides expansive views of the surrounding area. Trips usually take two to three days by four-wheel-drive vehicle or three to four days by mountain bike. All vehicles and bikes must remain on roads. ATVs are not permitted. Under favorable weather conditions, the White Rim Road is considered moderately difficult for high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles. It is a challenging mountain bike ride, and requires caution for both vehicles and bikes during inclement weather.

Permits are required for all overnight trips along the White Rim. During the spring and fall, demand for permits frequently exceeds the number available; visitors need to make reservations well in advance. Bicyclists and four-wheel drivers must stay in designated campsites. Twenty individual campsites are arranged in ten camping areas. Toilets are provided at each campsite. When there is more than one site at any particular location, they are generally positioned to be out of earshot and, whenever possible, sight of each other.

Above: Chesler Park, a popular hiking destination in the Needles District.

Below: Part of the Great Gallery rock art panel in Horseshoe Canyon.

NEEDLES

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

Visitors access the district from US Highway 191. About 40 miles (60 km) south of Moab or 14 miles (22 km) north of Monticello, Utah Highway 211 intersects with 191, and heads west roughly 35 miles (56 km) into the district. Highway 211 ends in the Needles, and is the only paved road leading in and out of the district.

The Needles Visitor Center is open year-round from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (except some winter holidays), with extended hours March through October. Exhibits, information and publications are available.

Squaw Flat Campground is an ideal base camp for day hikes to popular destinations like Chesler Park, Druid Arch and the Joint Trail. There are 26 sites available on a first-come, first-served basis. Restrooms, fire grates, picnic tables, tent pads and water are available year-round. The campground typically fills every day from March through May and again from September through October. There are also three group campsites which may be reserved in advance.

THE MAZE

The Maze is the least accessible district of Canyonlands. Due to the district's remoteness and the difficulty of roads and trails, travel to the Maze requires more time, as well as a greater degree of self-sufficiency. Rarely do visitors spend less than three days in the Maze, and the area can easily absorb a week-long trip.

The Orange Cliffs Unit of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area shares Canyonlands' western boundary and is administered under the same backcountry management plan and permit/reservation system.

The Hans Flat Ranger Station is two and one-half hours from Green River, Utah. From I-70, visitors take Utah Highway 24 south for 24 miles. A left hand turn just beyond the turnoff to Goblin Valley State Park begins a drive on a two-wheel-drive dirt road 46 miles (76 km) southeast to the ranger station. From the ranger station, the canyons of the Maze are another 3 to 6 hours by high-clearance, 4WD (more if traveling by foot). Another four-wheel-drive road leads into the Maze north from Highway 95 near Hite Marina (driving time is at least 3 hours to the park boundary).

There are no amenities like food or gas, no entrance fees and no potable water sources in the Maze District.

HORSESHOE CANYON

Horseshoe Canyon contains some of the most significant rock art in North America. The Great Gallery, the best known panel in Horseshoe Canyon, includes well-preserved, life-sized figures with intricate designs. Other impressive sights include spring wildflowers, sheer sandstone walls and mature cottonwood groves along the intermittent stream in the canyon bottom. Horseshoe Canyon was added to Canyonlands in 1971.

Private river trip pulled over to scout Big Drop One in Cataract Canyon.

Most visitors access Horseshoe from the west. Two-wheel-drive access to the west rim of Horseshoe Canyon is from Utah Highway 24 via 30 miles of graded dirt road, or from Green River on 47 miles of dirt road. Driving time is roughly 2.5 hours from Moab or 1.5 hours from Green River. A four-wheel-drive road leads to the east rim of Horseshoe Canyon from the Hans Flat Ranger Station. All access roads may become impassable during storms.

Visitors may camp at the west rim trailhead on public land managed by the BLM. A vault toilet is provided but there is no water. Overnight camping is not allowed in Horseshoe Canyon within the Park boundary.

From the west rim trailhead, the hike to the Great Gallery is 6.5 miles round-trip, descending 750 feet and requiring about six hours. Pets are prohibited below the rim of Horseshoe Canyon. Group size is limited to 20 people. There is no water above the canyon rim and water sources are unreliable within the canyon.

The trail into Horseshoe Canyon from the west rim trailhead is an old 4WD road that is suitable for horses. Group size limit is ten animals and ten people. Permits are free.

Rangers lead guided hikes in Horseshoe Canyon April through October. Walks depart the west rim parking lot Saturday and Sunday mornings.

THE RIVERS

The Colorado and Green rivers wind through the heart of Canyonlands, cutting through layered sandstone to form two deep canyons. Both rivers are calm upstream of the Confluence, ideal for canoes, kayaks and other shallow water craft. Below the Confluence, the combined flow of both rivers spills down Cataract Canyon with remarkable speed and power, creating a world-class stretch of white water.

River flows are dependent upon snowmelt and rainfall. The character of the rivers changes dramatically depending on the season. High water generally stretches from early May to late June

All launch ramps on both rivers are outside the park. There is no vehicle access to the rivers near the Confluence or in Cataract Canyon. While hiking trails lead to the rivers from each of the districts, these trails are too long and rugged to be seriously considered for shuttles, even for inflatables and other lightweight boats. Groups wishing to avoid the white water must arrange an upstream shuttle back to Moab.

Cataract Canyon contains fourteen miles of rapids ranging in difficulty up to Class V. It is a particularly hazardous and isolated section of the Colorado River and is subject to extreme water level fluctuations. A permit is required for all trips through Cataract Canyon. Personal water craft are not permitted on the rivers in Canyonlands.

A Brief History of the Park

Top: Ancestral Puebloan granary.

Middle: Cowboy camp in the Needles District (circa 1939).

Bottom: Mining activity at the Island in the Sky in the late 1960s, just after Canyonlands was established.

The first humans known to visit Canyonlands were Paleoindians, who searched for large game animals and edible plants as long as 10,000 years ago. Some of their stone projectile points have been found in the park.

It was not until the Archaic period, about 5,000 years ago, that people routinely lived in the area. From about 5000 years ago to A.D. 250, people continued to gather wild plants and hunt animals, utilizing stone tools and the atlatl, a spear-throwing device. The importance of grasses is recorded on many archaic rock art panels, especially those representative of the "Barrier Canyon" style that can be seen in Horseshoe Canyon.

By A.D. 250, farming techniques from Mesoamerica had reached the southwest, and ancestral Puebloans were cultivating corn and constructing storage structures for grains. Initially, these agriculturalists did not have much use for the hot, dry climate of Canyonlands. However, growing populations in nearby Mesa Verde and new techniques of floodwater farming caused people to take advantage of bottomlands and alluvial banks in many canyons of the southwest. By A.D. 1200, there was a major occupation in Salt Creek Canyon in the Needles District. You can see the storage structures or granaries used by the ancestral Puebloans in the Needles District at Roadside Ruin, and at the Island in the Sky on Aztec Butte. Around A.D. 1300, the ancestral Puebloans left the region and moved south to Arizona and New Mexico.

Ute Indians moved into the area as early as A.D. 1300, living without permanent dwellings much like the hunter-gatherers in the Archaic period. Ute, Navajo and Paiute Indians all occupied southern Utah when Spanish explorers entered the area in the late 1700s, though their use of the Canyonlands area appears to have been minimal.

In the 1770s, the Escalante and Dominguez parties circled Canyonlands, looking for a route between Santa Fe, New Mexico and Monterey, California. French and American trappers entered the area in the early 1800s. The US Army sent Captain John N. Macomb on an expedition to explore the Colorado Plateau for a wagon route from New Mexico to Utah in 1859. The Macomb expedition drew the first accurate maps of southeast Utah, and compiled geographical and geological information of the area.

Europeans knew little of the Colorado River and its tributaries until 1869, when Major John Wesley Powell completed his first expedition from Green River, Wyoming through the Grand Canyon. Powell repeated the expedition in 1871-72, continuing his studies of the natural and cultural history of the area. Bert Loper, Charles S. Russell, and E.R. Monett made the first pleasure run down the Colorado River through Cataract Canyon in 1907. In 1937 Norman Nevills started commercial river trips down the Colorado.

In March 1883, the Denver & Rio Grande railroad joined with the Rio Grande Western railroad near Green River, Utah, providing rail transportation to southeast Utah. This, combined with the removal of Native Americans to reservations during the late 1800s and early 1900s, nurtured the growth of communities like Moab, Monticello and Bluff.

From the 1880s until 1975, much of Canyonlands was used for ranching, and features in each district of the park bear the names of cowboys. The Dugout Ranch, outside the Needles District, is still operated by the Indian Creek Cattle Company, under ownership of the Nature Conservancy.

Much of Canyonlands was accessible only by foot or horse until the uranium boom of the 1950s. With the growth of the country's nuclear arms program, the Atomic Energy Commission offered monetary incentives for the discovery and delivery of uranium ore. Certain rock layers in Canyonlands contain uranium, and prospectors built many exploratory roads on public lands in search of radioactive "gold". Many of these routes, including the White Rim Road at the Island in the Sky, are popular four-wheel-drive roads today; others exist as remnants of past human use that are slowly revegetating.

In the 1950s and early 60s, Arches National Monument Superintendent Bates Wilson began advocating for the creation of a "Grand View National Park" in what is now Canyonlands. Wilson first visited the area by horse in 1951, and spent four years working on a National Park Service archeological investigation of the Needles District. The Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, visited the area in 1961, and began lobbying Capitol Hill for a national park on what were then Bureau of Land Management lands.

On September 12, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Public Law 88-590 establishing Canyonlands National Park Initially consisting of 257,640 acres, the park was expanded in 1971 to its present 337,570 acres.

Visitor Services Project

Summary
The Visitor Services Project (NPS Office of Social Science) conducted a survey of Canyonlands visitors from May 10-16, 1990. Four hundred and fifty-five questionnaires were distributed and 399 returned, an 88 % response rate.

Experiences
The most important experiences to visitors during their visits were scenic views, clean air, wilderness, and solitude. Commercial tours were the least important. Several educational topics – geology, archeology, and history – were considered to be of about equal importance; biology was rated as somewhat less important.

Interpretive Services
According to visitors, the most useful interpretive services were the park map/brochure, highway directional signs, visitor centers, and trail brochures.

Group type
53% were in families, with 59% of those in groups of two. 36% of visitors were 26-40 years old and 29% were over 55 years of age. Most (65%) were first-time visitors.

Visitor Origins
Foreign visitors constituted 11 % of total visitation, and commonly came from Germany, Canada, and Switzerland. Americans came from Colorado (29%), California (15%), Utah (11%), and other states.

Time in Park
Of the visitors spending less than one day in the park, 43% spent four to six hours. Of the visitors who spent one day of more, 61% visited for two to three days.

Activities
Most visitors viewed scenery (99%) and hiked less than four hours (65%).

Commercial Tours
Most visitors were aware of commercial tours in the park prior to their visit (71%). Nine percent of the visitors took commercial tours. They most often relied on travel/tour books (41%) to find out about the tours.

2002 Monthly Visitation

Month	Recreation Visits
January	4,093
February	6,319
March	29,731
April	42,027
May	58,935
June	44,019
July	34,974
August	38,388
September	49,280
October	41,444
November	12,747
December	5,121
Total Visits	367,077

Annual Visitation

Year	Recreation Visits	Year	Recreation Visits	Year	Recreation Visits	Year	Recreation Visits
1965	19,400	1975	71,700	1985	116,672	1995	448,769
1966	20,200	1976	80,000	1986	172,987	1996	447,527
1967	23,200	1977	75,500	1987	172,384	1997	432,697
1968	26,300	1978	85,932	1988	212,100	1998	436,524
1969	26,000	1979	74,545	1989	257,411	1999	446,160
1970	33,400	1980	56,505	1990	276,831	2000	401,558
1971	55,400	1981	89,915	1991	339,315	2001	368,592
1972	60,639	1982	97,079	1992	395,698	2002	367,077
1973	62,500	1983	100,022	1993	434,844		
1974	59,000	1984	102,533	1994	429,921		

Existing Interpretive Facilities, Media & Programs

Top: The Canyon Country Outdoor Education program.

Bottom: Cover of the 2003 Canyonlands Park Guide which is handed out at entrance stations and visitor centers.

PARKWIDE

Southeast Utah Group Headquarters

Headquarters for the Southeast Utah Group (which includes Canyonlands and Arches National Parks, and Natural Bridges and Hovenweep National Monuments) is located about three miles south of Moab on Highway 191. Information services are available for the public.

Off-site Programs and Services

Community outreach programs are an important component of the Canyonlands interpretive program and are offered year-round. Activities include presentations at agency and community organization meetings, senior citizen and community centers, and staffing a booth at county fairs.

Canyonlands National Park Web Site

<www.nps.gov/cany > Overall this is a high-quality and valuable web site, and is frequently used by the public. Information is now more accessible and consistent than in the past. Reservations cannot be made online due to security issues.

Education Program

The Canyon Country Outdoor Education program connects area students with the resources and experiences of Canyonlands National Park, as well as Arches National Park and Hovenweep and Natural Bridges National Monuments. The program employs two permanent Education Specialists (one based in Moab and one in Monticello), as well as seasonal Education Technicians as funding allows.

In Grand County (Moab) the program serves some 750 students from grades one through six. Each student receives classroom visits before and after field trips, and participates in from one to three field trips per school year. Subjects are based on the Utah State Core Curriculum for Science Education, and add a field-based unit of study for required subject matter.

In San Juan County the program is similar however the logistical challenges are great. Unlike Grand County where all county schools are located in a single town, there are five towns in San Juan County with schools. The programs there concentrate on two grade levels each year.

The curriculum-based activities published in the teacher's guide (Red Rock Adventures) is available on the website.

Partnerships

Partnerships with other area organizations and agencies are numerous and invaluable. They include:

- San Juan County Multi-agency Visitor Center (Monticello) – includes San Juan County, National Park Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Canyonlands Natural History Association, and the City of Monticello.
- Moab Information Center (Moab) – includes National Park Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Moab Area Travel Council (Grand County) and Canyonlands Natural History Association.
- Canyon Country Partnership – a consortium of federal, state, and county land managers; authorized by the Secretary of the Interior; a forum for sharing information and working on common issues.

Publications

Canyonlands offers visitors the following free publications:

- Newspapers: Canyonlands Trip Planner, Canyonlands Park Guide Newspaper
- Unigrid Park Brochures: Canyonlands National Park (translations available in French, Spanish, German and Italian)
- Orientation/Information site bulletins and handouts: Island in the Sky Hiking Trails and Four Wheel Drive Roads, Needles Hiking Trails and Four Wheel Drive Roads, Maze Hiking Trails and Four Wheel Drive Roads, Commercial Tour Operators, Directions to Moab Hospital, NPS Volunteers-In-Parks brochure
- Regulations: Pets & Canyonlands, Rock Climbing, Pack & Saddle
- Natural History/Cultural History: Geology, Cryptobiotic Soils, Desert Varnish, Natural History, Gnats, Bighorn Sheep, Cultural History
- Species Lists: Amphibians, Reptiles, Mammals, Fish

ISLAND IN THE SKY DISTRICT

Visitor Center

The Visitor Center is the primary contact facility for Canyonlands. It is located one mile inside the park boundary. In FY 2002, 103,588 visitors used the facility. It was built in the late 1980's. It includes a lobby, information counter, exhibit area, sales area, small auditorium (which seats about 11), and detached vault toilets. The loca-

Above: Mesa Arch

Below: Hikers on the Grand View Point Trail.

tion provides good access to visitors and allows contact of many visitors before they visit other areas of the park.

This is the primary visitor contact point in the district. Its primary functions are:

- Orientation, information
- Visitor Services
- Interpretation
- Resource protection, safety
- Permits

Exhibits interpret park geology, plants, animals, and history. They were installed in the late 1980's when the building was built. They are in good condition, and provide interesting information, but don't cover all primary park themes. Orientation is not sufficiently covered. However, the most popular and effective exhibit seems to be an orientation panel (what to do if you have one hour, two hours, or all day).

A video program, "Wilderness of Rock," is shown on request in the auditorium. The video includes general orientation and interpretation. It seems to be popular and effective, and is requested frequently. It is shown on a monitor. Staff offices are located downstairs.

Summary Assessment of Island Visitor Center
The building is too small. It is frequently crowded and circulation works poorly, producing a substandard experience and restricting the effectiveness of interpretive media and personal contacts. Exhibits are adequate but too narrow in scope. Orientation media are lacking. Bus tours are increasing in frequency and the current visitor center is woefully inadequate to accommodate even moderate size groups. Restroom facilities are likewise completely inadequate, consisting of two single vault toilets detached from the visitor center itself. These two toilets must accommodate both visitors and staff members.

Grandview
This site, 12 miles from the visitor center, provides a spectacular view of the park. It is the most-visited place in the park; this is the answer to visitors who have time only to visit one place. The three land districts of Canyonlands and the Green River are visible. There is an adequate-sized parking lot with a short trail to the overlook. A moderate two-mile round-trip trail is quite popular. Two wayside exhibits interpret geological formations and identify visible features. Personal services include roving interpretation and daily overlook talks from March through September. Guided walks are also frequently provided.

Mesa Arch
About six miles south of the visitor center is the trailhead and parking lot for Mesa Arch. This is an easy one-half mile loop trail that rewards hikers with a close up experience of impressive Mesa Arch, and a panoramic view of the White Rim and La Sal Mountains. A trail brochure concentrates mostly on plant identification. The trailhead wayside is obsolete.

Top: Overlook talk at Grand View Point.

Bottom: Island in the Sky Visitor Center

Upheaval Dome
At the end of the road, this site is a trailhead for a popular one-half mile trail and an eight-mile trail, with a parking lot (not large enough) and picnic area. There is an outdated trail brochure. Upheaval Dome provides scenic and scientific interest, since geologists differ as to its origin.

Wayside Exhibits & Trailheads
Some panels exhibit color deterioration from sunlight. Two panels contain errors. There are some gaps in interpretation, and nothing on wilderness.

All wayside panels are 24"x36", horizontal format, low-profile, fiberglass embedment. Frames are metal and are mounted on either freestanding masonry block bases or on horizontal wooden fence railings.

Wayside Titles and Topics:

1. There's Something in the Air - air quality
2. The Neck - explains Island in the Sky name, historic uses of Island in the Sky
3. Anatomy of a Canyon - geology (Note: panel incorrectly states "Indians created pictographs by pecking…")
4. Dropping into the Canyon - cattle ranching and uranium mining activities
5. Track in the Canyon - effects of cattle ranching and uranium mining activities
6. Grand View Point Overlook - identification of topographic features
7. The Three Worlds - geologic history
8. What Shall We Find? - J.W. Powell's first expedition
9. Green River Overlook - identification of topographic features
10. A Salt Dome? - salt dome theory re. formation of Upheaval Dome
11. Ground Zero - meteorite theory re. formation of Upheaval Dome

All trailhead panels are 32"x48" vertical format, fiberglass embedment. Frames are metal and are mounted in freestanding masonry block bases. All panels include a trail description and one other subject.

Trailhead Panel Titles/Locations and Topics:

1. Mesa Arch Trail - resource message re. cryptobiotic soil (Note: uses outdated term "cryptogamic")
2. Aztec Butte Trail - ancestral Puebloans
3. Whale Rock Trail - plant adaptations in a pinyon-juniper woodland
4. Upheaval Dome Overlook Trail - salt dome & meteor impact theories

There are three 32"x 48" vertical plexiglass-covered bulletin cases in Willow Flat Campground that provide seasonal interpretation and ranger-guided activity schedules, orientation, safety suggestions, and fee information.

Four 32" x 48" interpretation/orientation panels and one plexiglass-covered bulletin case are located at the U313/US191 information kiosk. Panels are of fiberglass embedment. Orientation is not especially well done. The site is not overrun by tourists.

Topics addressed by the Interpretation/ orientation panels:

1. Canyon Country
2. Canyonlands National Park
3. Dead Horse Point State Park
4. Island in the Sky

Topics addressed in the bulletin case:

1. Seasonal orientation and safety

Self-guiding Trails
Trail brochures currently sell for a nominal donation at trailheads and in the visitor center. Two are available: Mesa Arch (desert ecology) and Neck Springs (desert ecology).

A self-guiding auto tour booklet for the Island in the Sky is also available from the cooperating association.

Campfire Circle
Located at the southern end of 12-site Willow Flat Campground, the site features a campfire ring and natural rock seats to accommodate an audience of approximately 20 people.

Personal Interpretive Presentations
From March through October, interpreters present evening programs several times a week at Willow Flat campground. Program attendance averages 10 to 15 people.

Twenty minute geology talks at Grand View Point are offered daily in the morning mid-March through October. Spring attendance averaged 10 people per talk during spring FY02. Additional talks and/or guided walks are offered daily in the afternoon mid-March through September. They are conducted at one of several viewpoints or trails (Grand View Point and trail, Green River Overlook, Mesa Arch Trail). Although subjects and themes vary, all walks address and interpret Canyonlands' significant features and primary themes. Spring attendance averaged 6 people per walk during FY02.

Top: Picnic tables near the Needles Visitor Center

Middle: Squaw Flat Campground

Bottom: Visitors consult a trail sign on the way to Chesler Park.

Mesa-top rove time is scheduled daily mid-March through October at a variety of locations, especially near trailheads. Backcountry rove time is scheduled intermittently. Contact with visitors is frequent.

NEEDLES DISTRICT

Visitor Center

The visitor center is located at the end of Highway 211, just inside the park boundary. The center opened in 1991. Remodeling took place in 1997 to convert the employee workroom into a backcountry permit and information office.

This is the primary visitor contact point in the district. Its primary functions are:

- Orientation, information
- Visitor Services
- Interpretation
- Resource protection, safety
- Permits

The visitor center contains an information desk, cooperating association sales area, backcountry office, exhibits, auditorium, rest rooms, fee office, staff offices, small library, utility room, and staff workroom. Services include area orientation, information on camping, hiking, and four-wheel-driving, backcountry trip planning, permit issuance, radio dispatching, and lost and found processing.

Approximately 65-70% of visitors entering the district stop at the visitor center. It is open daily except for Christmas Day and New Year's Day. In March through May hours of operation are 8:00am to 6:00pm. Visitation is primarily for backcountry use, with spring the busiest season for backpacking. Extended hours during these months are necessary for issuing permits, providing backcountry information, trip planning and providing resource protection messages. In June through August hours of operation are 8:00am to 5:00pm. Visitation tapers off at this time due to excessive heat. Although hours used to be extended once again in September through November, staffing shortages have precluded this in recent years. Fall hours remain 8:00am to 5:00pm. To provide the highest level of customer service to our visitors, hours should be 8:00am to 7:00pm March through October, and 8:00am, to 5:00pm November through February.

Total square footage is 4,395 square feet. About 3,040 square feet are dedicated to visitor area and restrooms, and 1,355 square feet to offices. The visitor center served around 58,597 visitors in 2002. New exhibits were installed in 1995. They are generally accurate, attractive, and in good condition. The auditorium seats twenty-five and is primarily used to show the park orientation movie Wilderness of Rock which is available on request. A minimum impact video *This Fragile Desert* is also shown on a regular basis to groups preparing to enter the backcountry. Other videos about the area are also occasionally shown.

A small cooperating association (CNHA) sales outlet carries an assortment of visitor publications, maps, postcards, videotapes, and visitor convenience items. A part-time CNHA employee works several days a week spring through fall. Park staff members also make sales throughout the year, and assume responsibility for all CNHA duties during winter months.

Translations of the park brochure are available in German and French. These are provided free of charge. A Junior Ranger booklet is available to children between the ages of 6 to 12 free of charge.

Kid's discovery daypacks are available for a rental fee of $2.50- per day. These packs offer a variety of activities for children ages 6 to 12. Binoculars, a hand lens, and notebook for plant and animal identification are included.

A small district library is maintained inside the visitor center. This provides an adequate supply of books, articles, and videotapes available on site for use by district employees. The interpretive staff primarily uses the library, however it has also proved to be a valuable resource for the Canyon Country Conservation Corps and other divisions. The interpretation division maintains responsibility for the collection.

Summary Assessment of Needles Visitor Center

The location and design of the building are attractive and the facility functions effectively. A major problem is that the visitor center would be difficult to expand. Space is currently adequate for visitors since a staff office was converted into a backcountry permit office, however, now there is not enough staff office space. Resource management/visitor protection staff offices are in a separate building, which is not always conducive to good communication or efficient operations.

Cave Spring

A .6 mile loop trail leads to a cowboy camp, ancestral Puebloan rock art, perennial spring, up two wooden ladders onto slickrock sandstone, and back to the parking area. A trailhead and two wayside exhibits provide orientation and interpretation; there is also a trail guide. This hike is great for families and other groups with children.

Pothole Point

Next to a small parking area, the sandstone is dotted with small depressions called "potholes." These occasionally fill with rainwater, which can then burst into life with tiny crustaceans, insect larvae, snails, and even tadpoles. The trail winds along several potholes, and also affords a good place to see the spires called "the Needles" that gave this district its name.

Roadside Ruin

Just inside the park boundary, this .3 mile loop trail offers visitors an opportunity to see a well-preserved granary built by ancestral Puebloans. A trail brochure explains prehistoric lifeways, concentrating on uses of plants found along the trail.

Other Trails

The Needles district has dozens of hiking options, comprising about 55 miles of trails. They range from easy loops to extremely strenuous and minimally marked.

Wayside Exhibits

A wayside exhibit plan for the Needles District was drafted in 1991 and completed in 1999. A total of 23 waysides for major trailheads and entrances to four-wheel-drive roads have been produced. There is an information/orientation kiosk (installed in 2001) at the junction of Highway 191 and Highway 211 with four wayside panels and a bulletin case. Signs north and south of the junction announce the location. Most of the waysides have been installed and installation of the remainder of them is underway.

One of the new wayside exhibit panels on how the Needles were formed will be duplicated for use at two locations. This will provide the much-needed opportunity for visitors to identify where the best views of the Needles are available. The first location is off the paved road near the picnic area, and the second is off the gravel surfaced Elephant Hill access road. Some minor road modification is necessary at the Elephant Hill access road which has not been completed. Waysides still await installation at both locations.

One fiberglass-embedded wayside exhibit is in place at Wooden Shoe Overlook along the scenic drive. Two metal photo exhibits are still in use. One is located at the entrance to Salt Creek/ Horse Canyon, and the other is near a rock art panel in Devil's Lane.

Bulletin Boards

1. Visitor Center – 4 standard cases
2. Squaw Flat Campground Loop A – (at comfort station) 3 standard cases
3. Squaw Flat Campground Loop B – (at comfort station) 3 standard cases
4. Squaw Flat Campground Loop B – (at trailhead) wooden case
5. Split Top Group Campsite – wooden case
6. Wooden Shoe Group Campsite – wooden case
7. Squaw Flat Group Campsite – wooden case
8. Cathedral Butte trailhead – 1 standard case (at trailhead, MOU with BLM)

Campfire Circle

Located in Loop A of Squaw Flat Campground, two campfire circles offer the ranger a choice as to whether to present the program under the partial shelter of a large boulder, or up on top of a slickrock outcropping. Both locations provide a traditional campfire talk setting with log benches, fire pit, and no audio-visual equipment. The campfire circles lend themselves well to non-slide illustrated interpretive programs that are consistent with the primitive nature of the area. The capacity of the lower campfire circle is around 50, while the upper can accommodate about 65. Solar-powered stairway and pathway lights provide illumination.

Pothole Point

Evening campfire program at Squaw Flat Campground.

Self-Guided Trails

Four self-guided trails with accompanying brochures are available in the Needles District.

1. Roadside Ruin Trail – A .3 mile loop trail with numbered stops identifying desert plants, and a close-up view of an ancestral Puebloan granary.
2. Cave Spring Trail – A .6 mile loop trail with cowboy history, ancestral Puebloan rock art, a natural seep, and excellent views of the district. This is an excellent trail for children. The first ¼ mile of trail is sandy, level, and would lend itself well to development as a wheelchair accessible trail. Currently, there are no wheelchair accessible trails in Canyonlands National Park.
3. Pothole Point Trail – A .6 mile loop trail with views of the Needles and pothole ecology.
4. Slickrock Trail – A 2.5 mile loop trail with views into Little and Big Spring Canyons. Distant views of Island in the Sky and the Maze.

Brochures for each of these trails may be purchased at the visitor center or picked up at the trailheads for a nominal donation. Over time, these brochures have been rewritten repeatedly, and most have been changed from self-guiding with numbered posts, to informational without numbered stops. A fresh look at the self-guided trail brochures would be beneficial.

Personal Services Program

Evening campfire programs are the backbone of the district interpretive program. These traditional non-slide campfire talks on a variety of natural and cultural history topics are well attended and highly successful. Programs are advertised in the visitor center as well as on park bulletin boards and in the San Juan County Multi-Agency Visitor Center and the Canyonlands Needles Outpost. They are offered seven nights per week from late March through the end of May, three nights per week in June and August and five nights per week in September and October.

Other formal interpretation offered in the Needles District includes providing instructors for the Canyon Country Outdoor Education program in San Juan County (spring and fall), and leading interpretive activities for the Canyon Country Conservation Corps, a summer youth crew. Special programs such as scheduled thematic nature walks and talks for school groups are offered as requested.

Permit talks are an important aspect of informal interpretation offered in the district. The personal contact with visitors, communication of resource protection messages, and safety information provided are critical to the success of the Backcountry Management Plan and a quality visitor experience. Since the Needles is primarily a backcountry area, providing this type of informal interpretation is one of the major responsibilities of the division.

Roving interpretation takes place approximately five days per week spring through fall. Since most visitors hike the trails, roving is an excellent way to make quality contacts. Trail roving will most likely continue to be one of the most successful interpretive services in this backcountry area.

Guided hikes, point talks, nature walks, morning fireside talks, orientation talks, children's programs, and guided four-wheel-drive vehicle tours of Horse Canyon have all been offered in the past, but have met with limited success. Since the Needles District is primarily a backcountry area, visitors come to hike by themselves or with family and/or peer groups. These types of ranger guided interpretive programs have not been well attended.

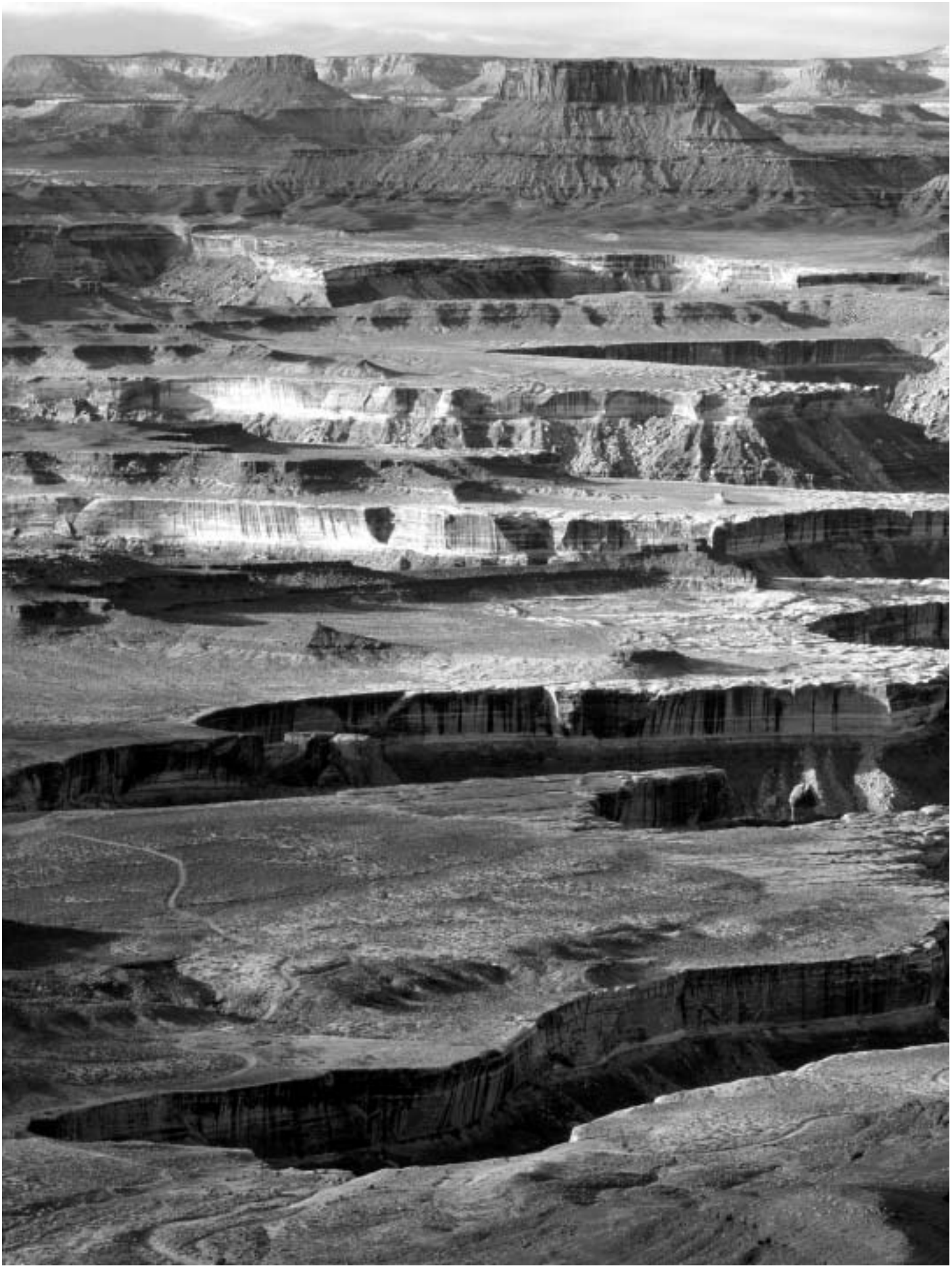
Numerous controversial issues surround Canyonlands National Park including road closures, adjacent development, natural sounds, night sky, and park completion. Many visitors ask detailed questions about these issues. The Needles District serves as an ideal location to address these issues through personal interpretation. By making a conscious effort to include controversial topics in the personal interpretation offered in district, both the park and visitors are well served.

THE MAZE

The Hans Flat Ranger Station is open year-round from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There is a small sales area with books and maps. There are no amenities like food or gas, no entrance fees and no potable water sources in the Maze District.

The minimal orientation and interpretation available (personal services, publications, maps) is adequate for this location.

Horseshoe Canyon: The main trailhead is on BLM land; there is a parking lot, campground, and toilet. Interpretation and orientation are provided by a kiosk with two bulletin cases and three wayside exhibits. There are two additional waysides in the canyon. Guided walks on weekends are well attended, mostly by local and regional visitors.



Recommendations

The following actions are recommended to be implemented over the next 5-10 years. They are designed to help accomplish park purpose and goals and meet the needs of both resources and visitors.

This is a long-range plan. Conditions and priorities are certain to change. Priorities will be set annually; actions described below will join road resurfacing, computer upgrades, and new patrol cars in jockeying for priorities.

Therefore this section describes recommendations rather than decisions, and avoids setting strict timeframes and linear priorities. Important actions will stand out and be identified through normal operating procedures at the park; some will compete at the regional and national levels. Interpretation, education, and visitor services are generally in good shape at Canyonlands NP; these are actions that will correct a few serious deficiencies, keep up with new challenges and changing conditions, and improve effectiveness.

PARK WIDE

- Provide better park and regional orientation for visitors. This can be accomplished with wayside exhibits at I-70 and other rest areas; outdoor exhibits at the expanded Island in the Sky Visitor Center; consider additional options at the Needles Visitor Center and two multi-agency centers (Moab and Monticello).
- Continue to work with nearby parks to develop a Learning Center for ecological research and education.
- Evaluate effectiveness of existing trail guides. Consider developing and evaluating a new guide using a different approach (e.g., a more conceptual approach, such as human use of the environment at Cave Spring). Evaluation could include literature search, interviews, focus groups, observation.
- Periodically review interpretation and education to ensure factual and balanced presentations that include multiple perspectives where appropriate and significant. Examples include interpretation of mining and ranching.
- If visitation increases and popular areas become crowded, consider directing more visitors to less-used areas that can accommodate more visitation.

ISLAND IN THE SKY

- Generally improve services and amenities for visitors. Consider improving or adding areas for picnicking, shade, and water.
- Expand the visitor center. The current center is too small, and doesn't meet necessary functions.
- The expanded center would take better advantage of views. The building would fit into the landscape.
- Expanded exhibits would address all primary themes and include interactive and multi-sensory elements. For example, geology could be effectively presented with audiovisual animation, which would be interesting to diverse audiences. Additional exhibits (perhaps mostly outdoors) would better relate to visitors' park and regional orientation needs. Let visitors know about things to do at other areas of the park, and at other areas in the region (especially little-known areas such as Hovenweep). Include strong resource protection and safety messages with orientation.
- The theater would be expanded. A video would be developed to promote low-impact 4WD vehicle use at Canyonlands (and could be used at several other areas as well).
- At Grandview Point build a shade structure with seating. It would accommodate about 15-20 people. It would be located away from the rim. The design would promote viewing, short programs, rest, shade, and social interaction. Interpretation would include roving assignments and short talks.
- Work with UDOT to install a sign on Hwy. 191 north of the junction with Hwy. 313 that announces the information kiosk at the junction.
- Develop a new brochure for Mesa Arch. It would have a desert ecology theme.
- Install wayside exhibits at two pulloffs (Orange Cliffs and Candlestick Tower) on the way to Grandview; one would interpret primary geological features visible from the site and one would interpret wilderness vaules.
- Revise the content of the wayside exhibit at Buck Canyon Overlook to be less judgmental about past human activities (mining and ranching). Correct inaccuracies on other waysides in the district.
- Eliminate Neck Spring trail guide. Produce a trail guide for Murphy Point. The main topic would be cultural history.
- Relocate Upheaval Dome picnic tables and disperse them to other picnic sites. The trailhead parking lot is usually filled with

Opposite: The view from Green River Overlook, Island in the Sky.

topics are well attended and highly successful.)
- Issue: short talks and nature walks aren't too successful; many have low attendance (about half have no attendance). Best personal services are: contacts with backcountry permittees, VC desk contacts, evening programs, roving, community outreach, outdoor education programs, requested guided programs, and Junior Ranger program.
- Recommendation: Continue to experiment with different types, schedules, lengths, and locations of programs, as well as publicity for them. Talk to visitors (interviews, focus groups) to find out what they say they would like (which is not always what they would actually do). Continue analyzing program statistics. Continue offering those types of programs that work well, conform to visitors' preferences, and meet park purpose and goals.

THE MAZE

- Develop general overview site bulletin for the Maze district. Primary audience would be visitors to other districts; functions would be interpretation and orientation.
- Increase quantity, quality, and variety of personal services at Horseshoe Canyon. Hire and station a GS 5/7/9 interpreter there. Upgrade bulletin boards. Compile published materials on Great Gallery in a site bulletin.

RIVERS

Interpretation is provided by concessioners who lead river trips. The park helps with training for Colorado Plateau River Guides. These programs should be expanded. Guides with river trips and 4WD excursions (often provided by the same concessioners) in the park should be trained in interpretation and be familiar with park themes and essential resource information and policies. Programs should be audited frequently enough to maintain reasonable quality assurance. The Park Service is responsible for the quality of interpretation conducted in the park regardless of who is providing it.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Interpretation and education play a central role in communicating park goals, mission, and other important messages. Outreach programs can target key groups; education programs reach students of all ages; both programs may reach previously uninvolved audiences. In-depth seminars build interest and commitment. Specifically designed communication strategies are required to present messages effectively to diverse audiences and to foster public appreciation and support. Examples of park issues requiring public support are:

- Management Plans
- Park Completion
- Wilderness
- Alternative Energy
- Exotic Species Removal
- Bighorn Sheep Transplant
- Road closures

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The outdoor education program is well-grounded and firmly established in Grand County with several partners participating in both program delivery and logistics. In San Juan County the program is much newer and logistically challenging due to widely scattered towns in a large geographic area. Funding for the program has largely been carved from the base funds for interpretive services at Canyonlands. Dedicated base funding for the outdoor education program is needed.

Trip planning assistance at the Hans Flat Ranger Station in the Maze.

RESEARCH NEEDS

Additional research is needed on a variety of social and environmental topics. The need to know more about the numbers, patterns, and expectations of front country visitors to the Needles district was discussed above. The expansion of the Island visitor center should be guided by front end and formative evaluation of media and the facility. Programs and media should be periodically evaluated to confirm effectiveness. The text and graphics for new wayside exhibits can be tested at a formative stage if there are questions about the effectiveness of different approaches or appeal to specific audiences. This is especially important when attempting to influence behavior, such as with resource protection or safety messages. How well the overall mix of facilities, services, media, and programs meets visitor, resource, and agency needs can be periodically tested. Visitor surveys are also necessary to gather socioeconomic and customer satisfaction information for GPRA and other park programs.

LIBRARY AND COLLECTION

The library for the Southeast Utah Group (SEUG) is located at Arches NP. Other sites – Hovenweep and Natural Bridges NM's, Needles and Island VC's, and SEUG headquarters – have small libraries of their own. The SEUG library is still organized on the Dewey Decimal system; the catalog is not on line. Upgrading the library would be an asset. There is also a need for more items for the interpretive collection to use in interpretive programs.

STAFFING

Additional staff are needed for interpretation and education. Not so much because overall visitation has increased over the last 10 years (it has), or because the adoption of Ranger Futures upgraded positions and made work years cost more (it did, just like for most parks), but because the visitor season has expanded. Visitors once arrived largely over a 6-7 month season, now the shoulder seasons (spring and especially fall) are busy. It's now a 9-month season, and even warm weekends in the winter bring local and regional visitors. Staffing is inadequate to keep up with visitation.

Another area where the staffing shows up is insufficient staff to provide oversight and quality assurance over commercial guide services in the park. As noted above, the Park Service is responsible for these services' quality and compliance with policies and guidelines.

Finally, the Southeast Utah Group lacks a geologist on staff. This affects not only research and resource management programs, but limits the subject-matter expertise of interpreters and educators, and hampers the ability of the park to provide content review and guidance on interpretive media.

The park has and will continue to rely heavily on alternate sources of staff, including volunteers, the Student Conservation Association, cooperating association employees, interns, and other partners.

The SCA and VIP programs will continue to be important.

Appendix

PLANNING TEAM

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Chief of Interpretation, Arches National Park

Jerry Banta
Superintendent, Southeast Utah Group

Phil Brueck
Deputy Superintendent, Southeast Utah Group

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Special Populations: Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media

Prepared by the Harpers Ferry Center Accessibility Task Force

Statement of Purpose

This document is a guide for promoting full access to interpretive media to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to National Parks. Just as the needs and abilities of individuals cannot be reduced to simple statements, it is impossible to construct guidelines for interpretive media that can apply to every situation in the National Park System.

These guidelines define a high level of programmatic access which can be met in most situations. They articulate key areas of concern and note generally accepted solutions. Due to the diversity of park resources and the variety of interpretive situations, flexibility and versatility are important.

Each interpretive medium contributes to the total park program. All media have inherent strengths and weaknesses, and it is our intent to capitalize on their strengths and provide alternatives where they are deficient. It should also be understood that any interpretive medium is just one component of the overall park experience. in some instances, especially with regard to learning disabilities, personal services, that is one-on-one interaction, may be the most appropriate and versatile interpretive approach.

In the final analysis, interpretive design is subjective, and dependent on both aesthetic considerations as well a the particular characteristics and resources available for a specific program. Success or failure should be evaluated by examining all interpretive offerings of a park. Due to the unique characteristics of each situation, parks should be evaluated on a case by case basis. Nonetheless, the goal is to fully comply with NPS policy:

"...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the quality of the park experience for everyone."

NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

AUDIOVISUAL PROGRAMS

Audiovisual programs include video programs, and audio and interactive programs. As a matter of policy, all audiovisual programs produced by the Harpers Ferry Center will include some method of captioning. The Approach used will vary according to the conditions of the installation area and the media format used, and will be selected in consultation with the parks and regions.

The captioning method will be identified as early as possible in the planning process and will be presented in an integrated setting where possible. To the extent possible, visitors will be offered a choice in viewing captioned or uncaptioned versions, but in situations where a choice is not possible or feasible, a captioned version of all programs will be made available. Park management will decide on the most appropriate operational approach for the particular site.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. The theater, auditorium, or viewing area should be accessible and free of architectural barriers, or alternative accommodations will be provided. UFAS 4.1.
2. Wheelchair locations will be provided according to ratios outlined in UFAS 4.1.2(18a).
3. Viewing heights and angles will be favorable for those in designated wheelchair locations.
4. In designing video or interactive components, control mechanisms will be placed in accessible location, usually between 9" and 48" from the ground and no more than 24" deep.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

Simultaneous audio description will be considered for installations where the equipment can be properly installed and maintained.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. All audiovisual programs will be produced with appropriate captions.
2. Copies of scripts will be provided to the parks as a standard procedure.
3. Audio amplification and listening systems will be provided in accordance with UFAS 4.1.2(18b).

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. Unnecessarily complex and confusing concepts will be avoided.
2. Graphic elements will be chosen to communicate without reliance on the verbal component.
3. Narration will be concise and free of unnecessary jargon and technical information.

EXHIBITS

Numerous factors affect the design of exhibits, reflecting the unique circumstances of the specific space and the nature of the materials to be interpreted. It is clear that thoughtful, sensitive design can go a long way in producing exhibits that can be enjoyed by a broad range of people. Yet, due to the diversity of situations encountered, it is impossible to articulate guidelines that can be applied universally.

In some situations, the exhibit designer has little or no control over the space. Often exhibits are placed in areas ill suited for that purpose, they may incorporate large or unyielding specimens, may incorporate sensitive artifacts which require special environmental controls, and room decor or architectural features may dictate certain solutions. All in all, exhibit design is an art which defies simple description. However, one central concern is to communicate the message to the largest audience possible. Every reasonable effort will be made to eliminate any factors limiting communication through physical modification or by providing an alternate means of communication.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

Note: The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) is the standard followed by the National Park Service and is therefore the basis for the accessibility standards for exhibits, where applicable.

1. Height/position of labels: Body copy on vertical exhibit walls should be placed at between 36" and 60" from the floor.
2. Artifact Cases:
   a. Maximum height of floor of artifact case display area shall be no higher than 30" from the floor of the room. This includes vitrines that are recessed into an exhibit wall.
   b. Artifact labels should be placed so as to be visible to a person within a 43" to 51" eye level. This includes mounting labels within the case at an angle to maximize its visibility to all viewers.
3. Touchable Exhibits: Touchable exhibits positioned horizontally should be placed no higher than 30" from the floor. Also, if the exhibit is approachable only on one side, it should be no deeper than 31".
4. Railings/barriers: Railings around any horizontal model or exhibit element shall have a maximum height of 36" from the floor.
5. Information desks: Information desks and sales counters shall include a section made to accommodate both a visitor in a wheelchair and an employee in a wheelchair working on the other side. A section of the desk/counter shall have the following dimensions:
   a. Height from the floor to the top: 28 to 34 inches. (ADAAG 4.32.4)
   b. Minimum knee clearance space: 27" high, 30" wide and 19" deep of clearance underneath the desk is the minimum space required under ADAAG 4.32.3, but a space 30" high, 36" wide and 24" deep is recommended.
   c. Width of top surface of section: at least 36 inches. Additional space must be provided for any equipment such as a cash register.
   d. Area underneath desk: Since both sides of the desk may have to accommodate a wheelchair, this area should be open all the way through to the other side. In addition, there should be no sharp or abrasive surfaces underneath the desk. The floor space behind the counter shall be free of obstructions.
6. Circulation Space:
   a. Passageways through exhibits shall be at least 36" wide.
   b. If an exhibit passageway reaches a dead-end, an area 60" by 78" should be provided at the end for turning around.
   c. Objects projecting from walls with their leading edges between 27" and 80" above the floor shall protrude no more than 4" in passageways or aisles. Objects projecting from walls with their leading edges at or below 27" above the floor can protrude any amount.
   d. Free-standing objects mounted on posts or pylons may overhang a maximum of 12" from 27" to 80" above the floor. (ADAAG 4.4.1)
   e. Protruding objects shall not reduce the clear width of an accessible route to less than the minimum required amount. (ADAAG 4.4.1)
   f. Passageways or other circulation spaces shall have a minimum clear head room of 80". For example, signage hanging from the ceiling must have at least 80" from

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. The exhibits will present the main interpretive themes on a variety of levels of complexity, so they can be understood by people with varying abilities and interests.
2. The exhibits should avoid unnecessarily complex and confusing topics, technical terms, and unfamiliar expressions. Pronunciation aids should be provided where appropriate.
3. Graphic elements shall be used to communicate non-verbally.
4. The exhibits shall be a multi-sensory experience. Techniques to maximize the number of senses used in the exhibits should be encouraged.
5. Exhibit design shall use color and other creative approaches to facilitate comprehension of maps by visitors with directional impairments.

HISTORIC FURNISHINGS

Historically refurnished rooms offer the public a unique interpretive experience by placing visitors within historic spaces. Surrounded by historic artifacts visitors can feel the spaces "come alive" and relate more directly to the historic events or personalities commemorated by the park.

Accessibility is problematical in many NPS furnished sites because of the very nature of historic architecture. Buildings were erected with a functional point of view that is many times at odds with our modern views of accessibility.

The approach used to convey the experience of historically furnished spaces will vary from site to site. The goals, however, will remain the same, to give the public as rich an interpretive experience as possible given the nature of the structure.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. The exhibit space should be free of architectural barriers or a method of alternate accommodation should be provided, such as slide programs, videotaped tours, visual aids, dioramas, etc.
2. All pathways, aisles, and clearances shall (when possible) meet standards set forth in UFAS 4.3 to provide adequate clearance for wheelchair routes.
3. Ramps shall be as gradual as possible and not exceed a 1" rise in 12" run, and conform with UFAS 4.8.
4. Railings and room barriers will be constructed in such a way as to provide unobstructed viewing by persons in wheelchairs.
5. In the planning and design process, furnishing inaccessible areas, such as upper floors of historic buildings, will be discouraged unless essential for interpretation.
6. Lighting will be designed to reduce glare or reflections when viewed from a wheelchair.
7. Alternative methods of interpretation, such as audiovisual programs, audio description, photo albums, and personal services will be used in areas which present difficulty for visitors with physical impairments.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Exhibit typefaces will be selected for readability and legibility, and conform with good industry practice.
2. Audio description will be used to describe furnished rooms, where appropriate.
3. Windows will be treated with film to provide balanced light levels and minimize glare.
4. Where appropriate, visitor-controlled rheostat-type lighting will be provided to augment general room lighting.
5. Where appropriate and when proper clearance has been approved, surplus artifacts or reproductions will be utilized as "hands-on" tactile interpretive devices.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

1. Information about room interiors will be presented in a visual medium such as exhibit copy, text, pamphlets, etc.
2. Captions will be provided for all AV programs relating to historic furnishings.

Guidelines Affecting the Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. Where appropriate, hands-on participatory elements geared to the level of visitor capabilities will be used.
2. Living history activities and demonstrations which utilize the physical space as a method of providing multi-sensory experiences will be encouraged.

PUBLICATIONS

A variety of publications are offered to visitors, ranging from park folders which provide an overview and orientation to a park to more comprehensive handbooks. Each park folder should give a brief description of services available to

distinguished by color, height, and texture.
   d. The digital maps are on an accessible web site.
   e. Same paper guides as above.
   f. Contrast of typeface background is high. (70% contrast is recommended)
   g. Proportional letterspacing
   h. Labels set in caps and lower case
   i. Map notes are flush left and ragged right.
   j. Little or no hyphenation is used as ends of lines.
   k. No extreme extended or compressed typefaces are used for main text.
   l. Sans-serif or simple-serif typeface.
4. The text contained in the park folder should also be available on audio cassette, CD and accessible web site. Handbooks, accessibility guides, and other publications should be similarly recorded where possible.
5. The official park publication is available in a word processing format. This could be translated into Braille as needed.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Hearing Impairments

Park site bulletins will note the availability of such special services as sign language interpretation and captioned programs.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Learning Impairments

1. The park site bulletin should list any special services available to these visitors.
2. Publications:
   a. Use language that appropriately describes persons with disabilities.
   b. Topics will be specific and of general interest. Unnecessary complexity will be avoided.
   c. Whenever possible, easy to understand graphics will be used to convey ideas, rather than text alone.
   d. Unfamiliar expressions, technical terms, and jargon will be avoided. Pronunciation aids and definitions will be provided where needed.
   e. Text will be concise and free of long paragraphs and wordy language.

WAYSIDE EXHIBITS

Wayside exhibits, which include outdoor interpretive exhibits and signs, orientation shelter exhibits, trailhead exhibits, and bulletin boards, offer special advantages to visitors with disabilities. The liberal use of photographs, artwork, diagrams, and maps, combined with highly readable type, make wayside exhibits an excellent medium for visitors with hearing and learning impairments. For visitors with sight impairments, waysides offer large type and high legibility.

Although a limited number of NPS wayside exhibits will always be inaccessible to visitors with mobility impairments, the great majority are placed at accessible pullouts, viewpoints, parking areas, and trailheads.

The NPS accessibility guidelines for wayside exhibits help insure a standard of quality that will be appreciated by all visitors. Nearly everyone benefits from high quality graphics, readable type, comfortable base designs, accessible locations, hard-surfaced exhibit pads, and well-landscaped exhibit sites.

While waysides are valuable on-site "interpreters," it should be remembered that the park resources themselves are the primary things visitors come to experience. Good waysides focus attention on the features they interpret, and not on themselves. A wayside exhibit is only one of the many interpretive tools which visitors can use to enhance their appreciation of a park.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Mobility Impairments

1. Wayside exhibits will be installed at accessible locations whenever possible.
2. Wayside exhibits will be installed at heights and angles favorable for viewing by most visitors including those in wheelchairs. For standard NPS low-profile units the recommended height is 30 inches from the bottom edge of the exhibit panel to the finished grade; for vertical exhibits the height of 6-28 inches.
3. Trailhead exhibits will include information on trail conditions which affect accessibility.
4. Wayside exhibits sites will have level, hard surfaced exhibit pads.
5. Exhibit sites will offer clear, unrestricted views of park features described in exhibits.

Guidelines Affecting Visitors with Visual Impairments

1. Exhibit type will be as legible and readable as possible.
2. Panel colors will be selected to reduce eye strain and glare, and to provide excellent readability under field conditions. White should not be used as a background color.
3. Selected wayside exhibits may incorporate audio stations or tactile elements such as models, texture blocks, and relief maps.
4. For all major features interpreted by wayside

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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