

# COLORADO CANYONS

## ... WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER

Western Colorado can be proud of their Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area (CCNCA), which was signed into law on October 24, 2000. This 122,300-acre portion of the Colorado Plateau, administered by the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Grand Junction field office, is a superb combination of canyons, mesas, wilderness, dinosaur bones, and unique plant and animal life. Add to this a 24-mile stretch of the Colorado River, carving its course along this key component of the recently designated Dinosaur Diamond National Scenic Byway.

The CCNCA, recognized for its wild and scenic nature, has long offered a variety of recreational activities. Each year, thousands of visitors enjoy hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, hunting, and 4-wheeling or floating peacefully down the river. For many, the heart of the CCNCA is the 75,550-acre Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness. Others might cite Kokopelli's Trail, a 140-mile bike trail that extends from the CCNCA, at Loma, Colorado, to Moab, Utah. Still others might focus on the extraordinary collection of paleontological sites within the CCNCA, such as Dinosaur Hill, the Mygatt-Moore Quarry at the Trail Through Time, or the Fruita Paleontological Area. But few can deny that this special area's existence in rapidly growing

Mesa County enriches our lives and enhances the local economy.

Managing such a diverse area presents a broad range of challenges, not the least of which is how we can continue to accommodate the current spectrum of uses, while maintaining a healthy and productive landscape.

Prior to its designation as an NCA, the BLM's 1998 Ruby Canyon/Black Ridge Integrated Resource Management Plan (RMP) guided the management of most of this area. Designation of the area as an NCA requires the completion of an RMP and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by October 2003.

Colorado National Monument, established in 1911 and our neighbor to the east, is also engaged in producing a general management plan (GMP). Monument Superintendent Palma Wilson and CCNCA Manager Greg Gnesios look at this parallel course as an opportunity to address a number of mutual issues along common boundaries, such as connecting trails, protecting cultural and natural resources, interpretation and visitor services. We are also working with the BLM in eastern Utah in defining and managing off-highway vehicle (OHV) use across our western boundaries.

The CCNCA planning process formally began on January 22, 2002, with a public open house in Grand Junction, followed by a similar meeting in Fruita in early February. The first CCNCA Advisory Council meeting was held in Grand Junction on February 14, 2002, and Working Groups were established shortly thereafter. The importance of public involvement in developing the plan cannot be overstated. These citizen-driven workgroups, meeting on a regular basis, are crucial to identifying critical issues and concerns and developing a range of alternatives for creating a successful and workable planning document.

This newsletter, as well as periodic updates to the BLM website <http://www.co.blm.gov/cocanplan/> will serve as tools to keep you informed of the planning process and how you can contribute to ideas and issues that will be addressed in the final document.

The decisions made now hold the key to Colorado Canyons' future. Please stay involved! 

Greg Gnesios  
CCNCA Manager



## NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

RMP/EIS PROJECT

US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
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# PLANNING CRITERIA

Planning criteria identify the legal, policy, and regulatory constraints that direct or limit BLM's ability to resolve issues. They also help guide the development of alternatives. Planning criteria are based on standards prescribed by applicable law and regulations, agency guidance, information pertinent to the planning area, and the result of coordination with the public and government agencies.

1. The Resource Management Plan (RMP) will be a comprehensive management plan for the long-range protection and management of the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area and the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness.
2. The RMP will reflect the legislative intent to conserve, protect, and enhance the area to benefit current and future generations and the unique and nationally important values of the land.
3. The RMP will be completed in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 and all other applicable laws. It will meet the requirements of Public Law 106-353 designating the CCNCA to protect its natural resources and outstanding recreation opportunities.
4. The planning process will include an EIS that will comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards.
5. The planning process will involve the local community and recognize the results of previous collaborative planning efforts, most

notably the Ruby Canyon/Black Ridge Integrated Resource Management Plan.

6. To enhance community involvement in the planning process, an Advisory Council will be established to advise the BLM on RMP development and implementation.
7. The planning process will involve Native American tribal governments and will provide strategies for the protection of recognized traditional uses.
8. The RMP will consider the geological, cultural, paleontological, natural, scientific, recreational, environmental, biological, wilderness, wildlife education, and scenic resources, allowing establishment of interpretive sites or facilities designed to protect these resources.
9. The RMP will set in place management goals and objectives for the 75,550 acres designated as the Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness, as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System and in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964.
10. The RMP will recognize that neither the Conservation Area nor the Wilderness shall include any part of the Colorado River.
11. The RMP will establish travel management goals and actions to allow motorized vehicle use only on roads and trails designated for motorized use; no cross-country, motorized travel will be allowed.

12. The RMP will allow continued management of grazing leases and permits in accordance with current BLM policy and with the Wilderness Act.
13. The RMP will recognize the Colorado Division of Wildlife's (CDOW) responsibility to manage wildlife on BLM-managed lands. The BLM will consult with CDOW in establishing policy for the purposes of protecting public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment.
14. The RMP will provide for the continued management of the utility corridor, Black Ridge Communication Site, and Federal Aviation Administration Site.
15. It will be recognized throughout the planning process that recommended actions cannot effectively establish buffer zones adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary.
16. The RMP will encourage the acquisition of private in-holdings in the Conservation and Wilderness, while continuing to allow reasonable access to private landowners.
17. Decisions in the RMP will strive to comply with existing plans and policies of adjacent local, state, and federal agencies, as long as the decisions conform with the NCA legislation, other laws and regulations, and other applicable legal or regulatory guidance.

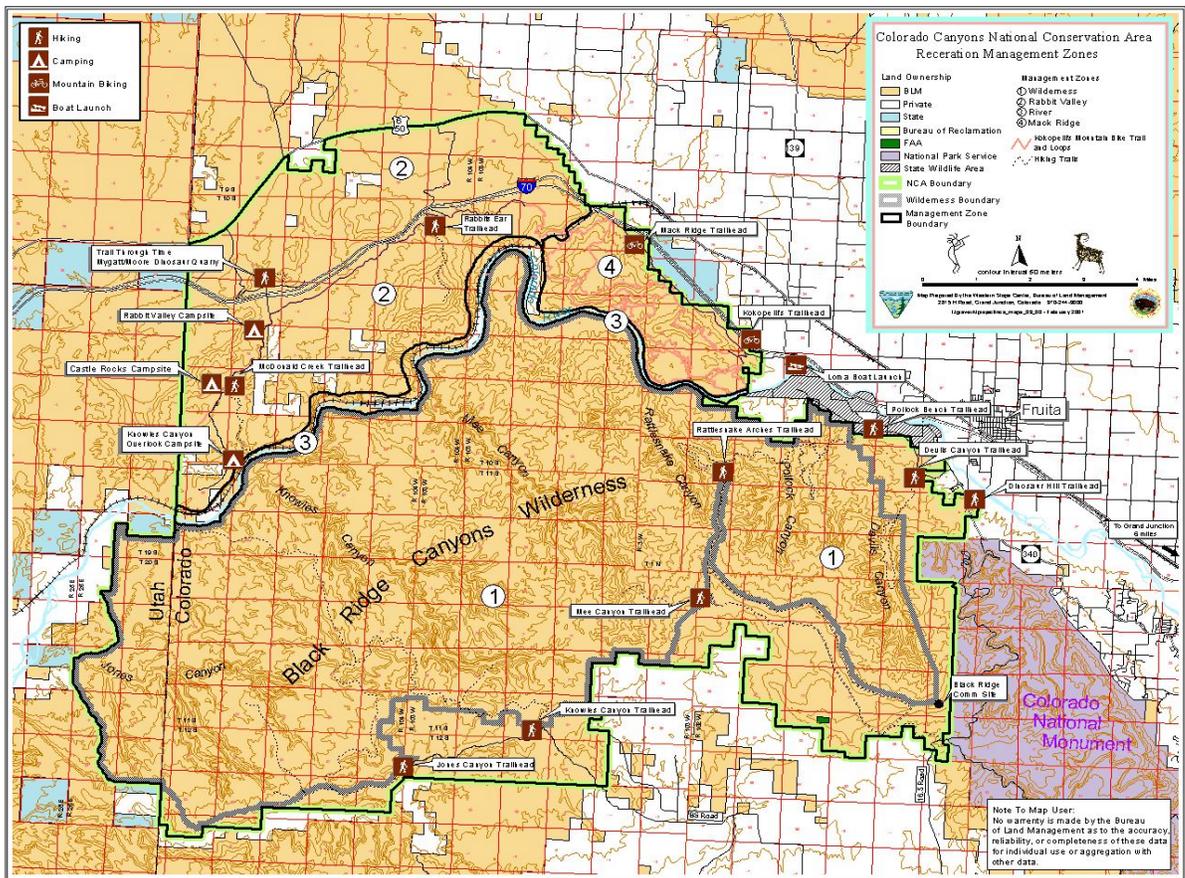
Please contact Jane Ross with any comments or suggestions. 

# ACRONYMS & TERMS



BLM	BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CCNCA	COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA
EIS	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
NCA	NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA
NEPA	NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT
RMP	RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
FLPMA	FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT

## COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA AND BLACK RIDGE CANYONS WILDERNESS



Note to Map User: No warranty is made by the BLM as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregation with other data.

Colorado Canyons NCA RMP/EIS  
2815 H Road  
Grand Junction, CO 81506



**COLORADO CANYONS**

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Spring 2003

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For more information, visit the **CCNCA website:**  
[www.co.blm.gov/cocanplan](http://www.co.blm.gov/cocanplan)



## PLANNING ZONES

As mandated by the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area and Black Ridge Canyons Wilderness Act of 2000 (The Act), the Grand Junction field office and CCNCA staff are preparing an RMP/EIS to guide in managing the CCNCA for the next 10 to 15 years. The Act recognized the historic involvement of the local community in public land management by directing the BLM to incorporate a citizen's Advisory Council as an integral part of this planning process.

To facilitate the work of the Advisory Council and BLM, the CCNCA was

## CONTACT US

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## MAILING INFO

CCNCA newsletters are published periodically. If you received a copy of this newsletter, your name is included in the BLM mailing list for this project. If you have an

address correction or want your name added or removed from the list, please contact Jane Ross.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 2003 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING DATES

February 6	July 3
March 6	August 7
April 3	September 4
May 1	October 2
June 5	November 6
	December 4

544 Rood Avenue  
Grand Junction, Colorado  
Meetings Begin at 3:00 p.m.

divided into four planning zones. Working Groups have been established for each of the four zones, and members of these Working Groups represent the various types of recreational uses enjoyed in the CCNCA. These groups meet periodically to discuss issues and concerns, as well as to formulate management recommendations that are forwarded to the CCNCA Advisory Council for further discussion. Zones and representative activities are:

1. The Wilderness Zone – hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, grazing, and hunting.
2. The Rabbit Valley Zone – OHV riding, hiking, Native American rock art viewing, camping, wildlife viewing, mountain bike riding, horseback riding, and grazing.
3. The Mack Ridge Zone – mountain bike riding and horseback riding.
4. The River Corridor Zone – boating, hiking, and camping.