

# Cedar Mesa / Grand Gulch Trip Planner

## Welcome to Cedar Mesa

**Cedar Mesa** is a network of canyons that are home to numerous prehistoric ruins and rock art panels. Excellent exploration opportunities exist for those seeking beautiful scenery and fascinating cultural remnants.

Streams carving into the Cedar Mesa Sandstone, the banded yellow-gray to reddish orange rock you see around you, are the slow-working sculptors creating these canyons. Beach and sandbar sands, left by a sea invading from the northwest during the Permian Period, around 250 million years ago, formed the sandstone!

Keep a lookout for naturally occurring arches. Water and frost slowly break down the weaker under layers of sandstone so that a hole appears, gradually growing larger, and eventually forming an arch.

You may notice the very dark streaks on the cliff walls. This is known as desert varnish. It is a thin deposit of minerals including iron, manganese, magnetite and windblown clay particles, combined with a thin layer of microscopic bacteria. The clay particles hold water that runs down the cliff faces, enabling the bacteria to survive. The bacteria absorb trace amounts of the minerals, and then precipitate it as a dark layer, or streak, on the rock surfaces. The darker the streak, the longer the process has been happening. These streaks also offer clues to where the water will pour off the cliff in a storm, so observe them closely as you set up your camp.

Truly unique about the Cedar Mesa area are the remnants of the past residents. Ancestral Puebloans inhabited the canyons and mesa tops between 700 and 2500 years ago. Many of their dwellings, farming areas, and rock art sites remain in excellent condition. Stone and bone tools, pottery pieces, and other artifacts give us hints of the lifestyle of these people. Treat everything you find with care and respect. Please leave all artifacts where you find them!

The canyons and mesas of the area are still important to the modern day Hopi, Ute, Navajo and various Pueblo tribes. This area has been home to many, as well as providing a rich source of medicinal and ceremonial plants, firewood, and game.



**Kane Gulch Ranger Station** is operated by the Bureau of Land Management, Monticello Field Office, from March 1st thru June 15th and September 1st thru October 31st.

All overnight hikers must obtain a permit and register at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station between 8 am and noon.

The Station is located on State Route 261, four miles south of US Highway 95.

The Ranger Station provides information on a seasonal basis about temperatures, weather forecasts, current road conditions, and unusual or noteworthy trail conditions on a blackboard just outside the door. Bulletin boards at the station and near the trailheads describe permit information, low impact hiking and camping information, and interpretation of cultural sites.

USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps and the Trails Illustrated Grand Gulch Plateau map #706 are sold inside the station or can be ordered through the Canyonlands Natural History Association (800 840-8978)

There is limited water available at the ranger station, during business hours only. The closest water is 10 miles north of the station at Natural Bridges National Monument.

Visiting Cedar Mesa is a challenge to orienteering and primitive camping and hiking skills. To allow for diversity in outdoor recreation experiences, the Cedar Mesa area is managed for a more primitive type recreation with as few human made amenities as possible.

Cedar Mesa is a very special and fragile place. Your hike can be a wondrous experience; a glimpse of past inhabitants.

Please remember you are responsible for leaving this place as you found it so you and your friends and family can continue to enjoy it in the years to come.



Cedar Mesa is managed by the U.S. Department of Interior  
Bureau of Land Management.

For more information, write:  
Bureau of Land Management,  
Monticello Field Office  
P.O. Box 7  
Monticello, UT. 84535

Phone: Permits 435-587-1510; Monday-Friday 8:00am-noon  
Or visit Cedar Mesa website at: [www.blm.gov/utah/monticello](http://www.blm.gov/utah/monticello)



# The People ★ ★ ★

## TIMELINE FOR THE FOUR CORNERS AREA

Dates (approx.)	Periods	Distinctive Characteristics
>12000 BC to 6000 BC	PaleoIndian	Small band of people foraged over very large territories. <i>Large now extinct mammals such as mammoth were hunted.</i>
6000 BC to 2000 BC	Archaic	Subsistence lifestyle based on wild foods; high mobility; low population density; shelters and open sites; <i>atlatl and dart for hunting; no pottery.</i>
2000 BC to 500 BC	Early Agriculture	Long-term seasonal use of caves for camping, storage, burials, and rock art; no pottery; <i>atlatl and dart for hunting; corn and squash cultivated.</i>
500 BC to AD 500	Basketmaker II	Habitation is shallow pithouse plus storage pits or cists; no pottery; <i>atlatl and dart for hunting; corn and squash cultivated.</i>
AD 500 to AD 750	Basketmaker III	Habitation is the deep pithouse with occasional "Great Kivas". Plain gray pottery, low frequencies of black-on-white pottery. <i>Bow and arrow replaces atlatl; beans added to cultigens.</i>
AD 750 to AD 900	Pueblo I	Slab-lined storage structures and unit pueblos of <i>jacal or crude masonry</i> . "Great Kivas"; <i>plain and neckbanded gray pottery.</i>
AD 900 to AD 1150	Pueblo II	Chacoan influence -- "Great Houses," "Great Kivas," Chacoan roads, etc. in many but not all regions. Corrugated gray and elaborate black-on-white pottery.
AD 1150 to AD 1290	Pueblo III	Large pueblos; cliff dwellings; towers; corrugated gray and elaborate black-on-white pottery. Abandonment of the Four Corners by AD 1290.
AD 1290 to AD 1500	Pueblo IV	Large, plaza-oriented pueblos in Rio Grande and western Pueblo areas; low kiva-to-room ratio; kachina culture becomes widespread. Remains of early Ute and Navajo sites are present.
AD 1500 to the 1960's	Historic	Early Spanish influence on Navajos and Utes. Mormon settlers pass through Cedar Mesa in 1880. Farming, Ranching and Mining follow.

Time line by

Donald J. Rommes and William D. Lipe—Cliff Dweller of Cedar Mesa 2013

*jacal* - A type of construction in which walls are made of upright poles set at short intervals and heavily plastered with adobe.

*atlatl* - Throwing sticks which have a handle on one end and on the other a spur which fits into a pit or cup drilled into the basal end of a dart shaft.

When the dart is thrown, the atlatl remains in the hand.



## ARCHAEOLOGY

The Basketmakers, who lived here from 500 BC to AD 750 are the earliest well documented human inhabitants of Cedar Mesa. This culture is thought to have derived from earlier nomadic hunters and gatherers, but artifacts from the Basketmaker period are the oldest yet found in the area. When these highly mobile people learned to plant and cultivate corn introduced from the south, they became more settled, and the Basketmaker culture evolved.

The Basketmakers constructed dwellings by excavating shallow pits. They then built up walls and a roof of logs and sticks and covered them with mud. They also used flint tools and wooden digging sticks. Their name was derived from the finely woven baskets they made. The most prevalent remains of the Basketmaker culture on Cedar Mesa are the rock art and their slab lined storage cists, which can still be seen on the mesa tops or on high ledges protected from the weather.

A series of droughts apparently drove the Basketmakers to the surrounding mountains. When their descendants returned around A.D. 1050, they brought with them the influence of the Mesa Verde people to the east and the Kayenta people from the south. As time passed, the Mesa Verde influence dominated in the Cedar Mesa area.

The Basketmaker culture developed into the Pueblo culture, which is characterized by the making of fine pottery (some of it highly decorated), the cultivation of cotton and weaving of cotton cloth, and a high degree of skill in architecture and stone masonry seen in the cliff dwellings of the canyons.

Check-dams and diversion canals, used in crop irrigation, have been found near Dark Canyon and other Colorado River tributaries. The kiva, an underground ceremonial structure found in the Cedar Mesa area, is still in use by the modern-day descendants of these people - the Hopi and New Mexico Pueblo Indians.

Cedar Mesa also has a diversity of rock art panels consisting of petroglyphs (pecked into the rock) and pictographs (painted on with pigments) dating from archaic to historic times. As the figures do not represent a written language, their meaning is left to our imaginations.

By the late 1200's the prehistoric Puebloans moved south into Arizona and southeast into the Rio Grande valley of New Mexico, probably because of droughts in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, depletion of natural resources, and pressure from nomadic tribes from the north.

## EARLY EXPLORATION

Pioneer ranchers and cowboys spent considerable time in the canyons and surrounding mesa tops of the area, and found many ruin sites and rock art panels.

The first recorded historic crossing of the area was in 1880 by the Mormon colonizing group known as the "Hole in the Rock" party. They passed through Cedar Mesa on their way toward Bluff, Utah.

In the fall of 1890, Charles McLoyd and C. Graham from Durango, Colorado, began excavation in the prehistoric sites.

Richard Wetherill, a rancher from Mancos, Colorado, excavated in Grand Gulch for the American Museum of Natural History in 1893 and 1897. It was primarily through Wetherill's expeditions that archaeologists became aware of the time difference between the Basketmaker and Pueblo periods. Some of the artifacts collected from the expeditions can be seen in the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

The Edge of the Cedars Museum State Park in Blanding, UT curates and exhibits artifacts from the Cedar Mesa and surrounding area.

The historic signatures of these early visitors, written with bullet lead and charcoal, may be seen in several places in Grand Gulch. Present day visitors are reminded these names written in the stone hold a great deal of historical value. **Please do not touch or deface them. Do not add your own signature.**

# ★ ★ ★ and the Place

## ANIMALS

Many animal species that the ancient people used for food and clothing can still be seen on Cedar Mesa. These Ancestral Puebloans used nets or snares to catch cottontail rabbits which added protein to



their diet and warmth to their blankets and robes. Infants were often wrapped in rabbit fur blankets for burial. Rock squirrels were probably eaten and their skins used for small items such as medicine bags.

These people hunted desert bighorn sheep and mule deer for food and clothing and

fashioned tools from the bones. Judging from the frequency with which desert bighorn sheep are depicted on rock art panels throughout the canyon, they must have been especially important to the residents.

The prehistoric Puebloans also valued turkeys. The feathers were often woven into blankets. It is believed that the turkeys were semi-domesticated animals.

In addition to these terrestrial animals, you may also observe a large variety of birds in the area including owls, wrens, vireos, finches, blackbirds, chickadees, warblers, flycatchers, swallows, hawks, and eagles.



## CLIMATE

Cedar Mesa's environment can be extremely harsh at certain times of the year. The weather is hot from June through August and it is not uncommon for the temperature to rise past 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperatures in the canyons are usually higher than on the mesa top. Summer rains come in late July or early August and can extend into September, bringing flash flood hazards. In the winter months, temperatures often fall below zero, and snow and ice cling to the canyon. This can make climbing and walking on the slickrock very hazardous.

### Average Temperatures (degrees Fahrenheit)

	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
<b>Spring</b>	26	68
<b>Summer</b>	48	86
<b>Fall</b>	35	77
<b>Winter</b>	16	45

**Recorded information on current road, trail and weather conditions on Cedar Mesa is available at 435 587-1532**

## PLANTS

The prehistoric peoples of Cedar Mesa used a number of the native plants for food, medicine, clothing, housing, and ornamentation.

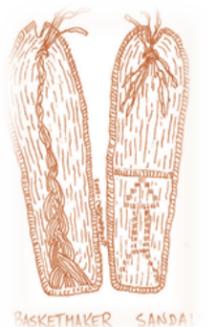
Indian ricegrass and dropseed were probably the most important of the native grasses. These could be harvested in early summer and ground into meal for bread. Fruits of the prickly pear cactus were peeled and eaten, the peeled and roasted pads were an important food source in times of hardship. The native groups also used four-wing saltbush, blackbrush, Mormon tea, wild turnips, potatoes, rose hips, and sunflower seeds.

The yucca's sword-like leaves were woven into baskets and sandals. Yucca leaf fibers were spun into cords for fine quality sandals and bags. Yucca roots were used for soap, while the stalks and fruit of the plant were roasted and eaten.

Pinyon pine trees were valuable sources of housing material, fuel, and food. In

the past, as in the present, a good crop of protein rich pinyon nuts could be harvested every few years. Wood from the juniper tree was used for firing pottery, as well as cooking, and heating. Juniper bark was used for several purposes such as roofing shelters and padding cradleboards.

By 2,500 years ago, prehistoric peoples cultivated crops such as pumpkins, corn, beans, and squash, which became their major source of food. The people stored corn, their primary year-round staple, in granaries and used it in a variety of ways. A type of bean, which resembled modern-day pinto beans, was the second most important crop. Squash and pumpkins provided important nutrition, and gourds were hollowed out and used for vessels.



## ASPEN CLONES

On the Kane Gulch trail, the canyon walls begin rising around 1.4 miles from the ranger station, just before an isolated grove of aspen trees. Aspens are usually found at much higher elevation. However, during the last Ice Age, glaciers moved across the land and deposited seeds which survived and grew into trees. The aspens in Kane Gulch are all of the same genetic makeup; they are clones and represent trees that have been growing there continuously for the past 10,000 years.



# Things to Remember ★★★

Cedar Mesa offers the adventurous visitor a chance to test practiced outdoor recreation skills and **Leave No Trace** techniques in a rare primitive setting. Except for a few sites along the U.S. Highway 95 corridor, the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, the Bullet, and Fish and Owl trailheads, you will not find vault toilets or picnic tables. There is limited seasonal drinking water available during business hours at the ranger station, but no trash receptacles. Mesa top car camping is primitive and is often accessed along roads requiring high clearance vehicles. Hiking is on slickrock canyon ledges and along wash bottoms and primitive foot paths. There are no constructed trails or directional signs along the hiking routes.

**Leave No Trace** techniques may sometimes seem inconvenient, but are a necessary part of protecting the Cedar Mesa environment. If these techniques are not already part of your camping practices, consider car camping, or begin with a less physically demanding hike that will allow you to practice these techniques.

**No wood or charcoal fires are allowed in any of the Cedar Mesa Canyons including Grand Gulch.**

## EXPERIENCE LEVEL

Cedar Mesa is a very difficult place for a first time hiker or backpacker. Remember, your party is only as strong as its weakest member. Beginners may want to consider car camping on the mesa top and attempting a few shorter day hikes to become familiar with the area, or hiring a local professional guide to see you safely through your trip. You may also want to try a hike at Natural Bridges or Hovenweep National Monuments, where you will also find visitor centers, toilets, campgrounds, and constructed trails accessing beautiful canyons with ancient ruins.

## TRAILS

The trails in the canyons and on the mesa tops are maintained mostly by hikers walking the same route repeatedly, thus allowing a barren path to develop. It is best to stay on the most impacted route visible; when available, use slickrock or wash bottoms, avoid creating unnecessary “social trails”.

Where the trail crosses slickrock, there are often cairns (small rock monuments) to point the way. Please do not add or remove trail cairns. Many routes into the canyons are not marked. It is imperative that you obtain and carry a good quality map and be skilled in orienteering and map and compass reading. GPS units are not always reliable between steep canyon walls. Maps weigh less, do not need batteries, and will not break when dropped!

Floods can cause the trail to erode, vegetation to flatten and lie across the trail for miles, and spread much debris across the canyon floor which the trail crosses, making hiking tedious. There are usually alternate routes to take in case of high water. Every year flash floods come through the canyons. Trails and cairns can be wiped out by one good storm. Volunteer trail crews help to rebuild badly damaged sections of the trail, but there is often a lag time between flood season and trail work. Encountering a flash flood is a serious concern while hiking, know the weather forecast before going in the canyons.

The dark crumbly looking soils next to the trails are actually living “*biological soil crusts*”. They are made up of lichens, mosses, green algae, micro fungi, and cyanobacteria. These organisms bind the soil together, making it resistant to wind and water erosion. Walking on these crusts can destroy them! Stay on the trail or try to walk only in washes or on rock when possible.

## WATER

Water conditions vary depending on the canyon and the time of year. During any time of year, water conditions can vary from week to week. Stop at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station to check conditions before you hike.

Most springs are dry during the summer months. You may need to pack in all your drinking water. Recommended minimums are one gallon per person per day. During and after heavy rains, springs can be covered by silt saturated flood water. The most reliable seasonal springs in Grand Gulch are Todie Spring, Sheiks Spring, and Jailhouse Spring.

Use care to avoid polluting water sources. Where permitted, dogs and pack stock must be closely monitored to prevent trampling and defecating in or near water sources.

## ENJOYING THE RUINS AND ROCK ART

Cedar Mesa and the adjacent canyons were once home to a remarkable prehistoric people. But this fascinating record of the past is threatened. The unintentional damage caused by visitors is slowly destroying the remnants of the ancient culture. These resources are nonrenewable. Before entering an archaeological site, take a few moments to plan your “exploration strategy” to ensure that your visit results in a minimum impact.

A *midden* is a trash pile left by the original occupants of the site. It is usually recognized by darkened soil and perhaps a slightly raised area in front of the site. Do not walk through the *midden*. This can destroy valuable archaeological information and causes erosion which may undermine the walls of structures above it. If a trail has been built across a site, stay on it. Please respect all chain barriers and any area marked as closed to entry, or physically closed to entry.

Climbing on roofs and walls can destroy in a moment what has lasted for hundreds of years. Do not lean on or climb on walls or roofs or enter any rooms. Use extra care around plastered walls. A bump with a backpack can easily break or chip the plaster.

When you see “thousands” of potsherds or other artifacts, leave them where they are. If each visitor took just one, there would soon be none left. Putting them into piles takes them out of context, exposes them to weather, and destroys clues needed by professional archaeologists gathering information about the site. Please do not reuse prehistoric grinding stones or surfaces.

Enjoy rock art by viewing, sketching and photographing it. Never chalk, trace, or otherwise touch rock art. Any kind of direct contact causes these ancient figures to disintegrate. Do not add your name or any other modern day rock art. This graffiti is vandalism and is punishable by law.

Archaeological and historical sites are protected by the Antiquities Act of 1906 and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA). It is illegal to damage or disturb any site or to remove anything from the site. If you discover any illegal activity please notify the Bureau of Land Management or the San Juan County Sheriff Office.

## ACTS OF NATURE

Acts of Nature present risks which the permit holder assumes. The user is responsible for inspecting and locating a campsite and inspecting the immediate adjoining area to avoid hazards such as dangerous trees, hanging limbs, possibility of flash floods or wild fire and other hazardous conditions. Permits and permit fees are not a guarantee against such acts of nature, including inclement weather and difficult trail conditions.

## EMERGENCIES

Knowledge of basic first aid should be a minimum for any hiking party. In case of emergencies, emergency radio communication and limited aid may be obtained from the rangers at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station when the station is open. Cell phones usually do not work in the canyons or in many locations on the mesa tops. Extended search and rescue is provided by the San Juan County Volunteer Search and Rescue Team through the San Juan County Sheriff’s Office. Response time for the Search and Rescue Team could be as much as 24 hours, and will usually be conducted in daylight hours only. The rescued party will be held financially responsible for any helicopter flights.

**Contact the San Juan County Sheriff at 435-587-2237**

## USE OF ROPES IS NOT PERMITTED

The use of ropes and other climbing aids are not allowed for access to cultural sites or archaeological resources as defined in ARPA. Using a safety rope as an aid along a hiking route is permissible.

## PERSONAL SANITATION

Personal sanitation and disposal of human waste is not permitted within 200 feet of a water source, trail, or campsite. Human waste must be deposited in a "cat hole" (six inches deep) and covered with soil. Used toilet paper must be carried out. Do not burn toilet paper. Washing, bathing, or swimming is not permitted in or near water sources such as springs, streams, and pot holes.

## LEAVE NO TRACE

## PACK IT IN PACK IT OUT

All trash, including toilet paper must be carried out. All liquids must be strained before disposal, and then discarded at least 200 feet away from water sources, camp sites, and trails. Use only biodegradable soap. Clean up campsites and day use areas including, obliterating any temporary structures such as rock tables or chairs, tie-up posts and the collection of all litter.

## MOTORIZED VEHICLES AND BICYCLES

Motorized vehicles and bicycle travel is limited to designated roads. Bicycles are not allowed on hiking trails. All vehicles used as a Mesa Top base for day hiking or overnight hiking in the canyons must have a hiking permit displayed on the vehicle dash or bike handle bars. Permittees with more than one vehicle can obtain a secondary vehicle permit from the Kane Gulch Ranger Station.



# Cedar Mesa Stock Use Stipulations



**ALL COMMERCIAL and PRIVATE STOCK USE REQUIRES A PERMIT.**

**All commercial and organized groups are required to submit a Special Recreation Permit Application.**

**All groups of 8 or more must make reservations for overnight and day use.**

A permit reservation system is in place requiring advanced reservation permits for overnight use to be obtained from the BLM Monticello Field Office (435) 587-1510 at least 3 weeks in advance for private parties and by July of the previous year for commercial trips. Walk-In overnight permits are not available. Private party payments may be made in advance of trip start date through the Monticello Field Office and a confirmation packet including stipulations will be mailed. However, physical overnight permits for commercial and private trips must be obtained from the Kane Gulch Ranger Station between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon on the trip start date or one day prior. Private day use does not require an advanced permit for canyons other than Grand Gulch.

**USE LIMITATIONS.** Stock use, both day and overnight, is subject to the provisions of the Grand Gulch Plateau Cultural and Recreation Management Plan which allows for no more than one overnight stock party at a time in any canyon on Cedar Mesa.

The BLM will monitor day use, and reserves the right to implement a day use allocation and reservation system at a future date if the impacts of day use visitation warrant.

**Grand Gulch (Fee Area)** - limited to only one stock trip at any time, day or overnight:

**Areas Open for Overnight/Day Use** – Collins to Bullet/Grand Gulch Junction, with entries at Collins and Government Trailheads.

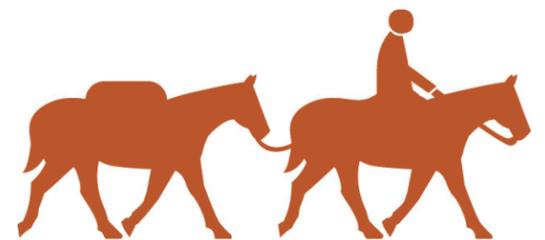
**Areas Closed** – Kane Trailhead to Bullet Trailhead and below the Collins confluence/Grand Gulch

**Fish/Owl Canyons, Road Canyon, Lime Canyon (Fee Area)** from the Comb Wash Access:

**Areas open for Overnight Use** - Fish Creek Canyon from Comb Wash to confluence with Owl Canyon, Road Canyon from Comb Wash, Lime Canyon, and Canyons south of U-95.

**Areas open for Day Use** - Fish Canyon - from Fish/owl confluence two miles up Fish Canyon, Owl Canyon - From Fish/Owl Confluence to Nevills Arch.

**Closed Areas:** Fish Canyon - beginning 2 miles upstream from Fish Canyon and Owl Canyon Confluence, and Owl Canyon above Nevill's Arch.



**McLoyd Canyon (Fee Area):** Day use only from Comb Wash. Trail head starts at Lower Fish Canyon.

**Lower Johns Canyon, and Arch Canyon (Non-fee Area):** Stock allowed. No day use fees are charged in these canyons.

**Slickhorn Canyons, and North/South Mule Canyons north of U-95:** **CLOSED** to all stock use.

**GROUP SIZE** for overnight and day use in the Grand Gulch Primitive area, and other Cedar Mesa Canyons is restricted to 12 individuals and 8 animals (pack and/or saddle).

**FEES** for all private/commercial overnight trips must be paid in advance through the Monticello Field Office. Private day use fees may be paid in advance or at any fee tubes.

**CAMPING** is allowed only at existing campsites. No new campsites may be developed. No unauthorized use of existing corrals.

**FEED:** All riding and pack animals must be fed certified weed-free feed for 48 hours in advance of and for the duration of the trip on public lands. Adequate amounts of feed must be carried for all stock.

**LOOSE HERDING** of pack and saddle stock is prohibited. All stock must be under physical control. When tethered, all stock must be at least 200 feet away from any water source and well away from archaeological sites and their surrounding benches.

**NO NEW TRAILS** will be established for stock use. Use will be restricted to existing trails and routes in areas open to recreational stock.

**CAMPFIRES** are prohibited in all canyons.



# Camping

LEAVE NO TRACE

## IN CANYON CAMPING

There are no assigned campsites in the canyon systems of Cedar Mesa, or on the mesa tops at this time. Some in-canyon campsites are easily seen from the trail; others are hidden, with side trails leading to them. Slickrock camps are a good option. Camping is not allowed in any alcove, overhang, or archaeological site. Camp in well used campsites only. No new camps may be made.

No swimming or bathing is allowed in the pools, streams or potholes.

Slickrock and non-vegetated ground, where there is no living biological soil crusts, are good choices. Camp at least 200 feet from water sources to allow wildlife to visit these areas.

**Fires are Not allowed in any of the Cedar Mesa Canyons.**

Recorded information on current road and trail conditions and weather on Cedar Mesa is available at 435 587-1532



## MESA TOP CAR CAMPING

Cedar Mesa car camping, combined with day hikes, is an enjoyable way to experience the area. There are numerous places on the mesa tops, as well as along dirt roads in Butler Wash, Comb Wash, and Arch Canyon to camp. No permits are required for car camping.

Motorized vehicles and bicycles must stay on open designated roads. Visitors must use an established campsite and avoid impacting pristine, undisturbed areas.

Camping is allowed only in well-established campsites. No new campsites may be created. On the mesa tops, fires are permitted only in established campsites and campgrounds. Fires should be contained in a metal fire pan. All ash and charcoal must be carried out, not buried or dumped in the campsite. Leave no trace camping techniques apply here also. All cans, trash, organic garbage, (orange peels, egg shells, coffee grounds etc.), and burnable garbage, including toilet paper, must be carried out. Use only biodegradable soap, and dispose of liquids at least 200 feet away from camps, trails, and water sources.

## CANYON HIKING WITH YOUR PET

Pets are not allowed in many of the canyons on Cedar Mesa. Please know where your pet is allowed to go. How well you manage your pet in the canyons today will have a direct impact on the future of this privilege. You can help by planning a safe and reasonable trip for you and your pet by following the pet stipulations listed below.

### CEDAR MESA PET STIPULATIONS

**Pets are not** allowed in Grand Gulch or its tributaries, Slickhorn canyon, Point Lookout canyon and their tributaries, or in the McLoyd Canyon/Moonhouse Ruin Recreation Management Zone.

**Where permitted**, all pets must be collared, leashed, and under human control at all times.

**Pets are not** allowed in or at any alcoves, rock art sites, or ruins. The instinctual habits of your pet to run, climb, chew, dig, and defecate at random can be extremely damaging to cultural sites.

**Pets must** not harass or harm wildlife. Wild animals have a very tenuous hold on life. The extra energy expended in fear of a possible or perceived predator can tip the balance between life and death.

**Pets must** not harass visitors and other visitors' pets. Remember, some folks are very leery of animals, no matter how friendly they are.

**Pets are not** allowed to swim or play in springs, potholes, or other natural water sources. Desert canyon and mesa water sources are priceless and must be maintained as pristine as possible for the health of wildlife and humans.

**Pets should** be kept quiet. Sound carries long distances in the canyons. Solitude and quiet are very important to most canyon hikers. If your pet is noisy, you may miss much of the canyon experience yourself.

**Pet waste** must be buried in a shallow hole away from trails, campsites, cultural sites, and natural water sources. Burying the waste helps reduce the smell and discourages flies.



LEAVE NO TRACE!!

### SAFETY TIPS

**Keep pets** on a leash. Leashes protect your pet from getting lost or getting into dangerous hiking situations. They can also protect your pet from porcupines, mountain lions, snakes, and other pets.

**Avoid hiking** with your pet in terrain you have not hiked before. Know the potential hazards before you take your pet. Be aware and conscientious of your pet's hiking ability. Just because your loyal friend will follow you anywhere does not mean anywhere is safe for your loyal friend.

**Pause to care** for paws. Your pet's feet are its lifeline in the backcountry. Check regularly for burrs or cactus spines that may get caught in paws. Watch for worn paws due to hiking on slickrock. Carry dog "booties" to slip over and protect damaged paws. You do not want to be carrying your dog out of the canyon!

**Avoid hiking** with your pet in extreme heat. A pet's natural body temperature is higher than humans, making pets much more susceptible to heat exhaustion. The slickrock and sand can quickly burn the pads of your pet's paws, which can be very painful and dangerous in the back country.

**Carry enough** water for you AND your pet. When hiking in the desert, water sources can be few, far, and unreliable. Carry at least as much water for your pet as you would for yourself and don't forget to carry a lightweight water bowl. Pets are susceptible to waterborne bacteria, including giardia. During and after your trip watch your pet for signs of intestinal distress.

**Carry a pet** first aid kit. Your veterinarian can give you advice on what to include. Many pet supply stores and catalogs offer ready-made kits for sale.

**Pre-trip conditioning**, like you, your pet needs to be in good shape for the hike. Before doing an extended hike, it is important to take your pet on several shorter training hikes. Watch for signs of fatigue, and rest when needed.



# How to get a permit ★ ★ ★

**FEES: There are fees for both day and overnight use.  
100% of your fees go to maintain and protect Cedar Mesa.  
Contact Monticello BLM office for information  
435 587-1510**

The National Parks Federal Recreation Lands Pass program (including the The America the Beautiful Annual Pass, Senior Pass, Access Pass, Volunteer Pass and Golden Pass) is not a valid permit. The America the Beautiful passes are only accepted for entrance fees to area such as National Parks or some National conservation areas. Special Recreation permits for Cedar Mesa SRMA are not part of the America the Beautiful pass program.

## **CEDAR MESA/GRAND GULCH ALLOCATION AND RESERVATION SYSTEM**

For overnight use in Grand Gulch, Slickhorn Canyon, Point Lookout, Fish canyon, Owl Canyon, North and South forks of Mule Canyon north of U.S. Highway 95. Road Canyon, Lime Creek, and their tributaries, you must obtain a backcountry permit. The allocation/reservation system applies to in-canyon overnight use only.

A reservation system is in place for spring (March 1-June 15) and fall (September 1-October 31). During other times of the year, self-pay envelopes and registration forms are available at the trailheads.

You may call for reservations at 435-587-1510, or write: Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 7, Monticello, UT 84535.

## **TRAILHEAD ALLOCATION FOR OVERNIGHT IN CANYONS**

Use is allocated by the total number of overnight visitors at each trailhead per day. Large groups (eight to twelve people), groups with pack stock, and commercial groups (including educational and scientific trips), and organized groups **MUST** have advance reservations. Affiliated, organized groups must supply proof of insurance to obtain a permit. Commercial outfitters are required to acquire dates by July of the previous year. Total overnight visitors per day for all Grand Gulch and other Cedar Mesa Canyon Trailheads is 20. Advanced Reservation permit group size limit is 12. Walk-in permits (one to seven people) are available on a first come first serve basis at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station.

## **HIKING AND OVERNIGHT PERMIT STIPULATIONS**

All overnight in canyon visitors must watch a 10 minute low impact video prior to obtaining their permit.

### **HOW TO MAKE ADVANCE RESERVATIONS**

Advanced reservations can be submitted only by:

**Phone:** (435)-587-1510

**Hours:** Monday-Friday between 8:00 am- noon

**Time Frame:** permits can be reserved 90 days prior to and no later than 5 days before your trip start date.

**No e-mail or faxes will be accepted.**

Group size is limited to 12 people for day and overnight use.

Commercial and organized groups must obtain an advance reservation.

Groups of eight or more must obtain an advance reservation.

All advanced reservation permits must be picked up at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station between 8 a.m. and noon on the date of the trip.

Stock trip reservations can be made starting the first business day of January for that calendar year.

Advanced reservations are issued on a first-come first serve-basis.

Date is reserved only when payment is received.

Payment can be made with credit card, check, or money order.

Accepted reservations will receive confirmation by mail, or email.

No refunds will be issued; however, cancellations received 15 days or more prior to the trip start date may be issued credit to be used within the same calendar year.

If requested start date is not available, you have the option of picking another date, trailhead, or canyon.

Permits must be attached to the trip leader's backpack. License plate numbers of all vehicles associated with the group must be written on the permit receipts, and all vehicles must have a permit visibly placed on dashboards. Vehicles passes are only available at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station.

### **HOW TO OBTAIN DAY USE AND MULTIPLE DAY USE PERMITS**

Day-use permits can be obtained at fee tubes placed at the following trailhead/canyon access, or at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station:

Kane Gulch	Cigarette Springs Road
Todie Canyon	Fish/Owl Trailhead
Bullet Canyon	Lower Fish Canyon
Shieks Canyon	Texas Flat Road
Government	Hole in the Rock Off US 95
Government/Slickhorn Rd	Snowflat Road - Upper/Lower
Collins Canyon	during off season

Group size for day use is limited to 12 people.

Payment can be made with check or cash. Fees must be placed in the envelope and dropped into the fee tube, with the tear off receipt placed on vehicle dashboard so permit number and dates are visible. This permit covers all occupants of that vehicle only.

Week-long day use permits can be obtained at fee tube locations, or at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station 8 a.m. to noon daily during the high-use season.

**Annual day use permits** are available at the Monticello Field Office or the Kane Gulch Ranger Station. This permit must be hung from the rearview mirror of the vehicle and covers the day use for the occupants of that vehicle only. These permits expire at the end of the calendar year.

### **HOW TO OBTAIN OVERNIGHT WALK-IN PERMITS**

Overnight, walk-in permits can be obtained at:

**Kane Gulch Ranger Station**

**Hours:** 8 a.m. to noon, daily

March 1-June 15, and September 1-October 31

Overnight, walk-in permits will be issued on the day of the trip, between these hours only.

No walk-in permits will be issued in advance of the trip start date. Payment can be made with credit card, check, or cash.



**Make checks payable to DOI - Bureau of Land Management**



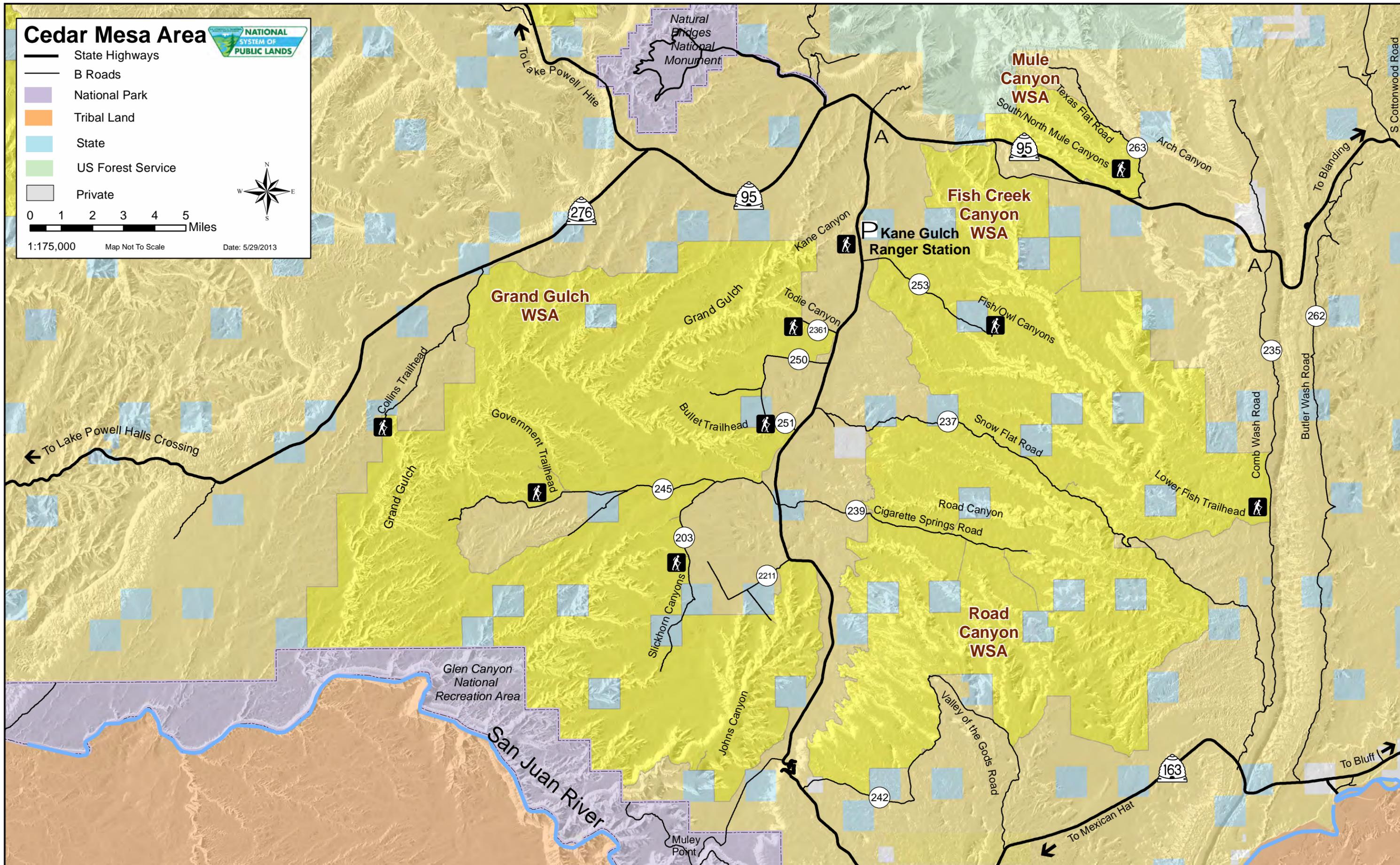
# Cedar Mesa Area



- State Highways
- B Roads
- National Park
- Tribal Land
- State
- US Forest Service
- Private



1:175,000 Map Not To Scale Date: 5/29/2013

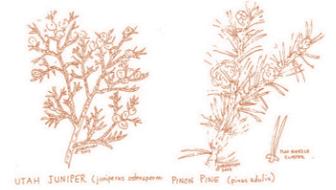


## SUGGESTED DAY HIKES IN THE AREA

# ★ ★ ★ Day Hiking

### BUTLER WASH RUINS

This hike is accessed directly off U.S. Highway 95. It is signed and the parking area is on the north side of the highway. The parking area is paved and pit toilet facilities are available. The hiking trail winds its way across some small washes and over slickrock before reaching an overlook of a cliff dwelling, 0.5 mile across the canyon. Round trip hiking distance is one mile, and travel time is approximately hour. It is an easy to moderate hike. Please recycle interpretive brochures at the trailhead.



### ARCH CANYON

From the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, drive 4 miles north to U-95, then east (right) for 13.5 mile. If you are traveling west on U-95 from Blanding, turn north on the Comb Wash Road, CR D2117, (a dirt road approximately 1 mile west of Comb Ridge, 14 miles west of U.S highway 95 and U.S. Highway 191 junction). The mouth of Arch Canyon is 2.5 miles up the dirt road. Arch Canyon is a 12 mile long box canyon. The canyon has beautiful redrock walls, and it is possible to view several arches. The creek that runs along the bottom of the canyon normally has water. All water should be treated before drinking. Look along the canyon walls for hanging gardens. You might also spot some cliff dwellings. Please remember to treat these special places with respect. The access at the mouth of Arch Canyon is Ute tribal land. Please respect this private property and observe all posted signs. Arch Canyon is open to motorized and mechanized access; however, all vehicles must stay on designated routes. Please be considerate of other trail users with whom you may share this route.



### CAVE CANYON TOWERS

This is a good hike for people who cannot go far or just want a sample of what the area is like. The access is off U.S. Highway 95 near milepost 103. Turn south on the first dirt road east of the Mule Canyon Ruins Interpretive Site. Please close the gate behind you on the access road. Continue on this road approximately 0.5 mile to several parking areas. From there, it is only a few hundred yards to the towers. There are seven towers along the rim of the canyon, although only two are in good shape.



### MULE CANYON (Fee area)

Mule Canyon is accessed from U.S. Highway 95. Look for the graded County Road 263 on the north side of the highway, approximately 19.0 miles west of the junction of U.S. Highways 95 and 191. Go north up the county road about .25 miles and park. Hike up the canyon to your left (west). Because of the orientation of this canyon, there are ponderosa pines and Douglas firs among the slickrock walls. This is a good day hike, especially with inexperienced or young hikers. In the first four miles, there are several sites. These are interesting sites, although smaller than those in Grand Gulch. The route begins in the canyon bottom, and there is very little elevation change, making it an easy to moderate hike.



### MULE CANYON RUINS

The Mule Canyon Indian Ruins Interpretive site includes a surface pueblo, a restored kiva and interpretive information. This hike is accessed directly off of U.S. Highway 95. It is signed and the parking area is on the north side of the highway. The parking area is paved and pit toilet facilities are available. A short, paved walkway leads from the parking area to the ruins and is wheelchair accessible. Viewing this site and reading the interpretive information can take just a few minutes to an hour.



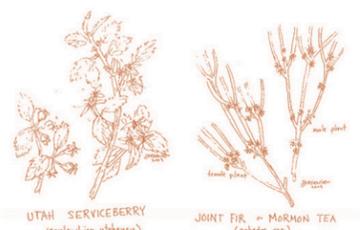
### KANE GULCH TO THE JUNCTION WITH GRAND GULCH (fee area)

From the Kane Gulch Ranger Station (located on State Route 261), you can hike down the Kane Gulch trail and into Grand Gulch. It is 4.0 miles one way to the junction of Kane and Grand Gulch and the trail drops approximately 600 feet in elevation. At this intersection, you can view a cliff dwelling called Junction ruin. If you decide to continue, in the next mile you can see Turkey Pen Ruin and Stimper Arch. From Kane Gulch Ranger Station to Stimper Arch is approximately 10 miles round trip. It is a full day hike for most people.



### NATURAL BRIDGES NATIONAL MONUMENT (National Park Service fee area)

Natural Bridges National Monument also has some good day hikes. There is an 8.0 mile loop hike as well as shorter variations of that hike. These hikes offer views of rock art, prehistoric dwellings, and three natural bridges. A small campground and limited water are available in the Monument.



# North and South Fork of Mule Canyon

(Fee Area)

Two fairly easy hiking areas are the North and South Forks of Mule Canyon, north of U.S. Highway 95. The two canyons run roughly parallel to each other. They are similar in appearance, being relatively shallow at the trailhead near the road, and gradually deepening as they wind toward the west. Alternating bands of red and white sandstone typify the canyon walls, which become increasingly sheer at the upper ends of the forks.



## MULE CANYON ACCESS POINTS

From Kane Gulch Ranger Station, drive 4 miles north to Highway 95 east. Go right (east) 14 miles to County Road 263 north, which is 0.5 mile east of the Mule Canyon Indian Ruins Interpretive site. Once you cross the cattle guard, the bulletin board and fee station for hiking these canyons will be immediately on the left. Continue to drive 0.25 mile north, where the road goes over Mule Canyon. This is the South Fork of Mule Canyon. Park in the pullout along the road or at the top of the hill as the road turns left. The trailhead is located to the west, just below the road. The North Fork is another 0.75 mile up the road where a short bridge crosses the North Fork.

## HIKING CONDITIONS

The South Fork of Mule Canyon is easy-to-moderate hiking. Although there is no constructed, maintained trail, the route follows the creek bottom and a commonly used foot path. Boulders and evergreen trees crowd the canyon bottoms in the upper ends, while the lower stretches are wider and more open. The hike is in the canyon bottom and only gains a few hundred feet over the course of 7 miles.

## WATER

Mule Creek does not flow year round, but there are usually pockets or pools of water in the wash bottom. However, they can be completely dry in summer and fall months.

## MAPS

The National Geographic #706, Grand Gulch/Cedar Mesa Plateau map, and/or the USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps: Hotel Rock and South Long Point.



# McLoyd Canyon/ Moonhouse Recreation Area

## Moonhouse Recreation Management Zone requires a Special Permit

**Public access will be limited to 20 people per day via a permit system for day visits.**

*Pets are not allowed in this management zone.*

Entry permits for the Moonhouse Recreation Management Zone are available **only** at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station during the high-use season. Day and annual permits do not apply. During the off season, permits will be available on a first come first serve basis at the trailhead. All commercial groups, organized groups, and private groups of eight or more, must have an advanced reservation, available through the Monticello Field Office permit desk. There is no overnight camping within the Moonhouse Recreation Management zone, and car camping is limited only to the designated primitive camp and park area south of the Snowflat Road.

Advanced reservations for private groups are available through the Monticello Field Office Permit Desk. All permits must be picked up at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station the morning of the hike.



# Getting there in Grand Gulch

## Distances from Kane Gulch Ranger Station

See *Trails Illustrated Grand Gulch Plateau Map*  
National Geographic #706

	Miles	Side Trip Miles
Ranger Station	0.0	
Junction Spring	4.0	
Junction Ruin	4.0	
Turkey Pen Ruin	4.7	
Stimper Arch	5.0	
Fortress Canyon	5.6	
Todie Canyon	7.2	
Spring (up Todie)		0.0
Spring (up Todie)	7.5	
Pour Off Pool	8.8	
Lion Tracks Spring	9.6	
Split Level Ruin	10.0	
Coyote Canyon	12.8	
The Thumb	13.7	
Shiek's Canyon	14.2	
Green Mask Spring		0.2
Bullet Junction Spring	15.0	
Jailhouse Spring	15.6	
Jailhouse Ruin		2.2
Perfect Kiva Ruin		2.4
Bullet Canyon Trailhead	7.2	2.7
Totem Pole	18.1	
Green Canyon Spring		0.2
Step Canyon	19.5	
Step Spring		0.8
Dripping Canyon	22.3	
Dripping Canyon Spring		0.8
Cow Tank Canyon	22.8	
Cow Tank Spring		0.8
Big Man Panel	24.7	
Polly's Island	26.2	
Government Trailhead		3.1
Big Pour Off Spring	29.3	
Deer Canyon	31.0	
Deer Canyon Spring		0.5
Banister Ruin	33.0	0.5
Collins Canyon	36.0	
Collins Canyon Trailhead		2.0
The Narrow	36.3	
Red Man Canyon	42.3	
Shaw Arch	45.0	
San Juan River	51.7	

## Camping

There are campsites scattered throughout the canyon.

See "Things to Remember" for camping tips.

Split Level Bench is closed to camping and no camping is allowed within one mile of the San Juan River



## ACCESS ROUTES INTO GRAND GULCH (Fee Areas)

Reminder: No pets are allowed in Grand Gulch and its tributaries.

### Kane Gulch to Grand Gulch

**Map:** USGS 7.5 Kane Gulch and National Geographic #706

**Access:** Park at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station.

**Trail:** 4.0 miles to the junction with Grand Gulch; easy to moderately difficult. The trail begins next to the trailhead kiosk at the west end of the parking lot and continues across the street. The Kane Gulch trail gradually descends 600 ft to the Grand Gulch.

**Water:** There are usually a few seasonally intermittent potholes of water 3 miles along the way.

**Campsites:** A beautiful group campsite is located at the junction of Kane and Grand Gulch, shaded by many large cottonwood trees; some campsites on slickrock are within 1.0 mile of the junction.

### Bullet Canyon to Grand Gulch

**Maps:** USGS 7.5 Cedar Mesa North, Polly's Pasture and National Geographic #706

**Access:** Drive 7.0 miles south of Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Highway 261 and turn right (west). This dirt road (County Road 251) takes you 1.5 miles to the trailhead.

**Trail:** 7.2 miles to the junction with Grand Gulch; moderately difficult. In 0.4 mile, the trail descends 100 feet in elevation with a few drops on slickrock along the trail. Approximately 1.5 miles from the trailhead is a boulder field that the trail skirts to the right along a steep slope. After the first 2.5 miles and a 500 foot drop in elevation, the trail flattens out.

**Water:** Jailhouse Spring is 5.0 miles from the trailhead and Bullet/GG Junction spring is in 2 more miles; these are often the only seasonal water sources in Bullet Canyon.

**Campsites:** There are campsites near both springs.

### Government Trail to Grand Gulch

**Map:** USGS 7.5 Polly's Pasture and National Geographic #706

**Access:** Drive 9.4 miles south of the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261. Just before Milepost 19, across from the Cigarette Springs Road, turn right (west) on a dirt road (County Road 203/245). Travel 2.5 miles, then turn right at the fork (County Road 245); continue 3.1 miles to the sign at the turnoff and go right (at this point high clearance is required). The trailhead is 1.5 miles from the sign.

**Trail:** 3.6 miles to the junction of Grand Gulch; easy to moderately difficult. From the trailhead, hike 3.0 miles on the mesa to the canyon rim. This mesa top section is completely exposed, offering no shade in the heat of the day. During a thunderstorm there is no cover from lightning, which often strikes the mesa tops. From the canyon rim, 0.6 mile of trail makes long, gradual switchbacks into Grand Gulch, dropping 400 feet in elevation and ending at Polly's Island.

**Water:** In wet weather, potholes along the descent and canyon bottom fill with rainwater. Polly's canyon has a seasonal intermittent spring approximately 1 mile up canyon.

**Campsites:** Near the top of the descent, there are places to camp on the slickrock. There are campsites near the junction with Polly's Canyon.

### Collins Canyon to Grand Gulch

**Map:** USGS 7.5 Red House Spring and National Geographic #706

**Access:** Drive north from the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261 for approximately 4.0 miles to U.S. Highway 95. Turn left, driving about 9.0 miles to State Route 276 and turn left again. Near Milepost 83 there is a sign indicating the Collins Canyon Road (County Road 260) to the left (east). This dirt road travels 6.5 miles to the trailhead; there is one fork, stay right. The road ends at the trailhead.

**Trail:** The trail gradually descends approximately 2 miles to the intersection of Grand Gulch

**Water:** Seasonal spring near the top of Collins and at the bottom near the Narrows.

**Campsites:** None before reaching Grand Gulch.

### Todie Canyon to Grand Gulch

**Note:** Todie Canyon is a suggested entry access for day hikes only. It is not recommended for novice hikers.

**Map:** USGS Cedar Mesa North and National Geographic #706

**Access:** Drive south of the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261 for approximately 3.5 miles (just before milepost 25). Turn right (west) on a dirt road (County Road 236A) which takes you 1.2 miles to the trailhead

**Trail:** 2.5 miles to the junction with Grand Gulch; difficult access, not recommended for novice or young hikers. Travel northwest past the parking lot along the south rim of Todie Canyon for 0.6 miles. The trail steeply descends 400 feet in elevation. Trail erosion and bouldering make the trail strenuous and technical.

**Water:** There is a seasonal spring 0.2 miles up Todie Canyon from the junction with Grand Gulch.

**Campsites:** There are campsites near the spring and at the mouth of the canyon.



## GRAND GULCH HIKING MILEAGES AND RECOMMENDED TIME (ONE WAY)

	KANE GULCH TRAIL-HEAD	GRAND GULCH	BULLET CANYON JUNCTION	BULLET CANYON TRAIL-HEAD	POLLY'S ISLAND	GOVERNMENT TRAILHEAD	COLLINS CANYON TRAIL-HEAD	SAN JUAN RIVER
KANE GULCH TRAILHEAD		4.0 miles 2-3 hours	15.6 miles 2 days	22.8 miles 3 days minimum	26.2 miles 4 days minimum	29.3 miles 4 days minimum	38.0 miles 5-7 days	51.7 miles 9 days
BULLET CANYON TRAILHEAD	22.8 miles 3 days	7.2 miles 3-4 hours			17.8 miles 3 days minimum	20.9 miles 3 days	29.6 miles 4 days	43.3 miles 7-8 days
COLLINS CANYON TRAILHEAD	38.0 miles 5-7 days	2.0 miles 1 hour	22.4 miles 3 days minimum	29.6 miles 4 days	11.7 miles 2 days	14.7 miles 2 days		17.7 miles 2 days minimum

# Slickhorn Canyon

### Fee Area:

Slickhorn canyon is a canyon of many shapes and colors twisted and carved in eroded reds, browns, and yellows. It is an impressive canyon with sandstone walls varying in height from 300 feet in the north end to 800 feet as the canyon approaches the San Juan River. The shimmering hues of the Cedar Mesa Sandstone give way to the rugged Halgaito Shale as the river nears.

### HIKING CONDITIONS:

Hiking in this canyon is rugged. The creek channel is frequently clogged with boulders, and there are many pour offs and steep talus slopes to be negotiated, challenging even the experienced hiker.

Pets and stock animals are not allowed in the Slickhorn Canyon, Point Lookout Canyon or their tributaries. At least four days should be allowed to hike the entire length of the canyon and explore the side canyons. The going is slow. Camping is not allowed within one mile of the San Juan River. This area is reserved camping for river rafters.

### WATER:

Slickhorn Canyon has a few springs in the upper forks of the canyon, and a bit more water during spring runoff, but can become extremely dry. Incredibly long, dry stretches may be encountered. Top off water bottles at any water source and return back if little water is found.

### ACCESS POINTS:

Although there are multiple access points for Slickhorn Canyon, Access No. 4 and Access No. 6, as listed on the National Geographic Grand Gulch Cedar Mesa Plateau map are recommended. For these access points, drive 9.4 miles south of the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261, then turn right (west) onto county Road 203 directly across from the Cigarette Springs Road. In 2.5 miles, you will reach a major junction; stay left, heading south.

Access No. 4 is 4.3 miles south of the major junction. The road dips down into the wash and continues. There are pullouts on both sides of the road for parking.

Access No. 6 is 1.2 miles beyond Access No. 4. The road passes over a cattle guard, and enters an area where the trees have been chained off. A corral will be visible at the head of a small draw. Park by the corral and follow the draw west into a side canyon.

All trailheads are accessible to two-wheel drive vehicles during good weather. High clearance is helpful. After a heavy rainfall, or during winter, the roads can become quite slick, and four-wheel drive is recommended. During very wet conditions, even four wheel drive vehicles may have some trouble. **Please use caution.**

### MAPS:

The Trails illustrated National Geographic #706 Grand Gulch Plateau map, and/or the USGS 7.5 minute topographic series maps: Slickhorn East, Slickhorn West, and Polly's Pasture.



# Fish and Owl Canyons

## (Fee Area)

Fish and Owl Creeks both cut diagonally across the eastern edge of Cedar Mesa, coming together several miles before they enter Comb Wash. They are both deep canyons, quite narrow, with an abundance of scenic beauty. Erosion from

Fish and Owl Creeks have created canyons that differ from the other canyon systems on Cedar

Mesa by their depth, the narrowness of the canyons, and their pools of water in the spring to fall months. The canyon walls average 500 feet high, with the width varying from several hundred feet to very narrow at the upper reaches of Fish creek.

Many of the pools in these canyons have extensive hanging gardens, offering a wide variety of vegetation. The rare Kachina daisy (*Erigeron kachinensis*) can be found at one of these springs. The vegetation varies from sage flats in the lower ends of the canyons to cottonwood trees and pine stands on the wider benches in the upper forks.

Nevill's Arch is an impressive, prominent feature in Owl Creek, jutting out into the canyon from high on a "fin" of Cedar Mesa Sandstone. There is another arch in Fish Creek, but it is hardly visible unless you are directly below it.

## WILDLIFE AND FLORA

Wildlife is scarce, but tracks of bobcat, mountain lion, ringtail cat, and an occasional bear may be seen in the canyons. Toads and frogs can be seen and heard, and there is also beaver activity in Fish Creek

Small fish including killifish, chubs, suckers and shiners or dace, may be found in the pools.

## HIKING CONDITIONS

There are no maintained trails in these canyons. Carry an accurate map! Stone cairns are often unreliable as they are easily knocked down and moved.

The recommended route is a loop which enters Owl Canyon and exits from Fish Canyon. The main loop is approximately 17 miles long. Three days is recommended to do this hike.

The first 3 miles of Owl Canyon are steep, mostly slickrock, with several large pour-offs to be circumvented. One of these detours involves going into a small side canyon on the north side of the main canyon and scrambling down some rocks. Nevill's arch is approximately 5 miles into Owl Canyon.

The junction of Owl and Fish Canyons is quite wide. Fish canyon is more narrow than Owl, but is gentle and without impasse in the first 5 miles.

The upper forks of Fish Creek are all blocked by boulders and rock fall. The fork running north to U.S. Highway 95 is considered difficult walking and is blocked for several miles by pour offs and talus. After passing this north fork, watch the south side of the canyon for the main route to the mesa top.

This route climbs out of the canyon approximately 600 feet on a steep talus slope to a 12-foot wall which may require passing packs and/or a short rope to reach the top. The trail then goes 1.5 miles through the pinyon juniper forest, crossing several drainages before returning to the trailhead.

## ACCESS

The road access to the trailhead is 1 mile south of the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261. Turn east and drive approximately 5 miles on a dirt road to an old drill hole which is the parking area. There is a bulletin board, register box, fee station, and pit toilets for day hikers at the trailhead. This road is passable to passenger vehicles (two-wheel drive) during good weather; however rain or snow can make it impassable even to four-wheel drive vehicles.

Access to Lower Fish is

9.1 miles south on Comb Wash Road from highway 95 or 9.2 miles north on Comb Wash Road from highway 163, turn on (CR D2294)

## WATER

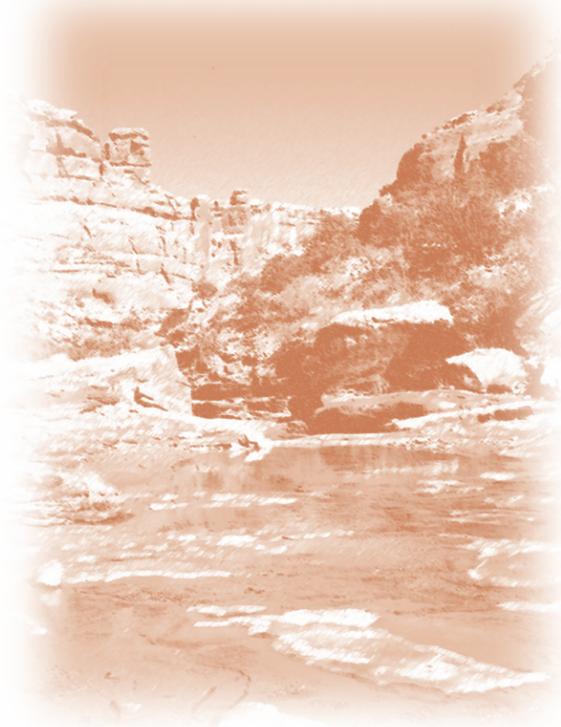
Upper Owl Creek has three large springs which are generally dependable in the spring, but do not count on them for water in the summer months. Owl Creek is usually dry from near Nevill's Arch to the confluence with Fish Creek. Fish Creek often has water in the stretch beginning approximately 2 miles above the confluence with Owl Creek and continues intermittently to the junctions with the upper forks. Conditions change daily. Filter all water.

## MAPS

The National Geographic #706 Grand Gulch/Cedar Mesa Plateau map, and/or the USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps: South long Point, Bluff N.W, Snowflat Spring Cave.



Ringtail



# Road and Lime Canyons

## (Fee area)

The elevation in the upper ends of both Road and Lime Creek Canyons begins at approximately 6,200 feet and drops to 4,900 feet at the lower ends. The walls of the canyons vary from 100 feet in the upper ends to over 500 feet in the lower ends. Erosion of the colorful Cedar Mesa Sandstone has created a layer cake effect of multiple tiers, especially in the middle and lower sections of the canyons. There are numerous archaeological sites present in both canyons. Please take care when visiting these fragile sites.

## ROAD CANYON ACCESS POINTS

From the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, drive 9.0 miles south on State Route 261 to the Cigarette Springs Road. Turn east and drive 3.5 miles to an unmarked pullout on the north. You will pass the Cigarette Springs bulletin board; register box, and fee station for day use permits. The route starts from the northeast corner of the parking area and runs 0.5 mile through the pinyon and juniper forest to the canyon rim and drops approximately 100 feet to the canyon floor.

Drive 6.1 miles from the junction of State Route 261 and the Cigarette Springs Road. Take an unmarked spur road to the left (north) and travel 0.8 miles to the end of the road on the canyon rim, (high-clearance vehicles only). From the parking area, enter the first drainage to the east and make your way down the main canyon.



## ROAD CANYON CAMPING

Car camping is available on the mesa top.

From State Route 261 Drive:

3.5 miles from State Route 261, on left, campsites in the trees.

3.8 and 3.9 miles from State Route 261, on right.

6.1 miles from State Route 261, turn left, travel 0.8 miles to the end of the road (high-clearance vehicles only).

8.8 miles from State Route 261, at the end of the Cigarette Springs road.

## LIME CREEK ACCESS POINTS

From the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, drive 9.0 mile south on State Route 261 to the Cigarette Springs Road. Turn left (east) and drive 3.4 miles to the Lime Creek Road (unmarked). Turn right and travel south 1.2 miles to a fork. Turn right and travel 3.0 miles to the head of Lime Creek Canyon. This route requires vehicles with four-wheel drive and high clearance. From the head of the canyon, an unmarked route descends into the canyon.

From the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, drive 13.0 miles south on the State Route 261 to Milepost 16. Turn left (east) on an unmarked road approximately 10 yards before the milepost sign. Travel 1.4 miles to a fork, then left 0.5 mile to the head of the canyon. Locate the unmarked trail mentioned above and descend into the canyon. This road requires high-clearance vehicles.

## LIME CREEK CAMPING

Car camping is available on the MP 16 access road, high-clearance is recommended:

## HIKING CONDITIONS - Road Canyon and Lime Creek Canyon

Permits are required for hiking these canyons. There are no maintained trails in either canyon. Routes generally follow the mostly dry creek beds. There are long stretches of slickrock in both canyon, with several pour-offs to negotiate. The canyon bottoms are not as lush as some of the other Cedar Mesa canyons, and shade is at a minimum.



## WATER

Both canyons have seasonal, intermittent running water which is usually confined to the upper ends of the canyons. There are several large pour-off pools to negotiate with large cottonwood trees, and extensive hanging gardens in the middle and lower portions of the canyon. No bathing or swimming is allowed in the pools. Remember that certain times of the year, you may encounter long, dry stretches. During summer months, the canyons can be totally dry. Keep water bottles topped off. Filter all water.

## MAPS

The National Geographic #706 Grand Gulch/Cedar Mesa Plateau map, and/or the USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps: Snowflat Spring Cave, Cigarette Spring Cave, and Cedar Mesa North.





# CANYONLANDS

## Natural History Association

Partners in Public Land Education

CNHA is a non-profit that supports the parks and public lands of southeastern Utah. Our goal is to enhance visitors' appreciation of public lands.

Your Purchase Supports the Grand Gulch Primitive Area  
[www.cnha.org](http://www.cnha.org)

You can order these books, maps and other interpretive information for the Cedar Mesa/Grand Gulch area at [www.cnha.org](http://www.cnha.org) or call us, toll-free, at 1-800-840-8978 x 110. Items can also be purchased at the Moab Information Center (MIC), corner of Main & Center St., Moab, UT, or at the Blanding Information Center, 12 N Grayson Parkway, Blanding, UT.

A limited selection of items is also available at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station during office hours or at the Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Center.

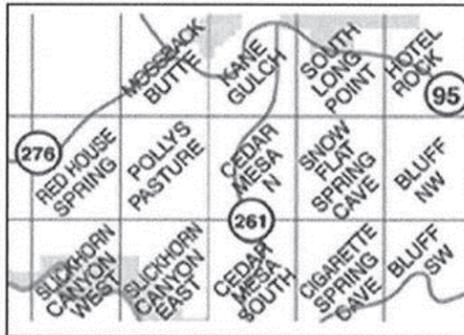


**#677 National Geographic Grand Gulch and Cedar Mesa Map** Coverage includes BLM/San Juan Resource Area, Cedar Mesa and the Grand Gulch Primitive Area, Northern Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Valley of the Gods, Comb Ridge, Fish and Owl Creek. Includes UTM grid for use with your GPS unit.

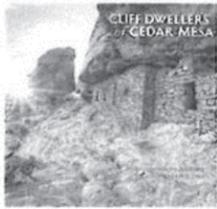


**#681 National Geographic Manti-La Sal Map** Outdoor Recreation map for the La Sal Mountains, Dark Canyon Wilderness Area, Natural Bridges National Monument; the Abajo Mountains, Bicentennial & Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byways and the Kokopelli Trail. GPS compatible. Full UTM grid.

USGS  
7.5 Minute  
Topographic Maps  
(scale 1:24,000)



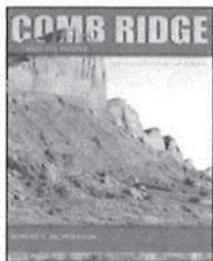
**#1688 Hiking Grand-Staircase Escalante & the Glen Canyon Region A Falcon Guide** (2nd Edition) Lace up your boots & sample 59 of the best trails in southern Utah! Includes the Grand Staircase-Escalante, Cedar Mesa & Grand Gulch, Dark Canyon, Natural Bridges & the Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness. Detailed maps and descriptions, tips on desert safety, backcountry travel and services.



**#3648 Cliff Dwellers of Cedar Mesa** by Donald J. Rommes & William D. Lipe  
The authors share their abiding fascination with Cedar Mesa's deep cultural history. Bill Lipe's archaeological insights and Don Rommes' stunning photographs show why they, and so many others, are drawn to this place. *Published by CNHA.*



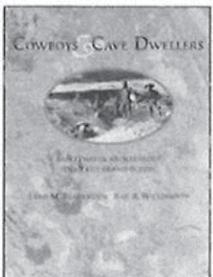
**#1816 Best Easy Day Hikes - Grand Staircase-Escalante and the Glen Canyon Region** (2nd Edition) *A Falcon Guide* Concise descriptions and detailed maps for nineteen easy day hikes in Cedar Mesa, the Escalante Canyons, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Paria Canyon.



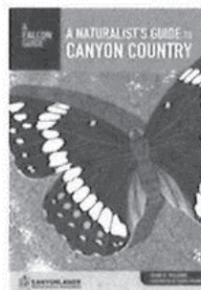
**#3289 Comb Ridge and Its People** by Robert McPherson  
The Comb is a unique one-hundred-mile long, two-hundred-foot high, serrated cliff that cuts across the sky. Whether viewed as a barrier wall or sheltering sanctuary, Comb Ridge has helped define life and culture in this region for thousands of years.



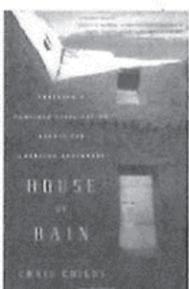
**#3569 What's In Bloom? Flowers of Cedar Mesa and Southeast Utah**  
A fold-out guide to the major flowers of Cedar Mesa and southeastern Utah to carry with you. Great photos taken by Kane Gulch Ranger Station staff and volunteers make identification easy. *Published by CNHA.*



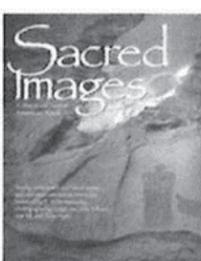
**#1465 Cowboys & Cave Dwellers** by Fred M. Blackburn, Ray A. Williamson  
This fascinating book tells the intertwined stories of 19th century archaeological expeditions into Grand Gulch and the Wetherill-Grand Gulch Research Project, one hundred years later. The authors present what we know about the Basketmaker culture and offer a stirring plea for the preservation of our nation's priceless archaeological heritage.



**#3666 A Naturalist's Guide to Canyon Country** by David B. Williams  
A comprehensive trailside reference to the plants, animals and geology of SE Utah and adjacent areas. This guide provides easy identification of more than 290 plants and animals plus geology of an area that includes nine national parks and monuments in the Southwest. Maps, color & B/W illustrations.



**#3177 House of Rain**  
Author Craig Childs draws on the latest research, as well as on a lifetime of adventure and exploration in the most forbidding landscapes of the Southwest, to frame the question of what brought about the rapid collapse of the Anasazi civilization in a whole new light.



**#3184 Sacred Images: A Vision of Native American Rock Art** This book brings together the talents of master photographers - Craig Law, John Telford, Tom Till, and Philip Hyde - and the storytelling skills of its indigenous peoples to present the visionary power of Utah rock art. *Published by CNHA.*