



Horseshoe Canyon



Horseshoe Canyon contains some of the most significant Archaic rock markings in North America. Other impressive sights include spring wildflower displays, sheer sandstone walls, and mature cottonwood trees that shade the canyon floor.

Cultural History

The archeology of Horseshoe Canyon spans thousands of years of human history. Artifacts recovered from sites in this area date back as early as 11,000 years ago, when Paleoindians hunted animals like mastodons and mammoths across the southwest.

During the Late Archaic period, 4,000 to 1,500 years ago, nomadic groups of hunter-gatherers made Horseshoe Canyon their seasonal home. They created the rock markings known as the “Barrier Canyon” style.

The Great Gallery is the best known and most spectacular of the Horseshoe Canyon panels. This well-preserved site includes both pictographs (painted figures) and petroglyphs (figures etched in the rock). The tapered, life-size figures, lacking arms and legs and frequently containing intricate designs, are characteristic of the Barrier Canyon style.

During later periods, the Fremont and ancestral Puebloan cultures left their own distinctive markings in the canyon. They left this area about 700 years ago.

Though Horseshoe Canyon is most famous for its ancient rock markings, the canyon’s

history has more modern chapters. Outlaws like Butch Cassidy made use of Horseshoe Canyon in the late 1800s, taking refuge in the confusing network of canyons, especially those around Robbers Roost to the southwest.

Later, in the early 1900s, ranchers built several stock trails into Horseshoe so cows and sheep could reach water and feed in the canyon bottom. Eventually, the ranchers constructed a pumping operation to fill water tanks on the canyon rim. Many of these modifications are still visible today.

Prospectors explored the area in the mid-1900s, improving many stock trails to accommodate vehicles and drill rigs. Though they searched the rock layers for oil and other minerals, no successful wells or mines were ever established around Horseshoe Canyon.

After Horseshoe Canyon was added to Canyonlands National Park in 1971, grazing and mineral exploration in the canyon stopped. Today, people descend the old stock trail and marvel at the history of this magnificent canyon.



Preserve the Past

Help us protect archeological resources. American Indians consider these cultural sites critical to the education and survival of their communities. Rock markings are extremely fragile and can be destroyed by the oil in human skin. Please do not touch or chalk around figures. All prehistoric artifacts and ruins are irreplaceable treasures. Walking through ruins, sitting on walls, handling artifacts, and leaving modern graffiti destroys a site's scientific and aesthetic value for future visitors.

Activities

Camping

You may camp at the west rim trailhead on public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. There is a vault toilet, but there is no water. No overnight camping is allowed in Horseshoe Canyon within the park boundary.

Hiking

From the west rim trailhead, the strenuous hike to the Great Gallery is 7 miles roundtrip (11.2 km), with an elevation change of 750 feet (228 m). The hike requires about six hours. **Pets are prohibited below the rim of Horseshoe Canyon.** Group size is limited to 20 people. Bring your own drinking water.

There is no water above the canyon rim and water sources are unreliable within the canyon. You should purify any water you find in the canyon.

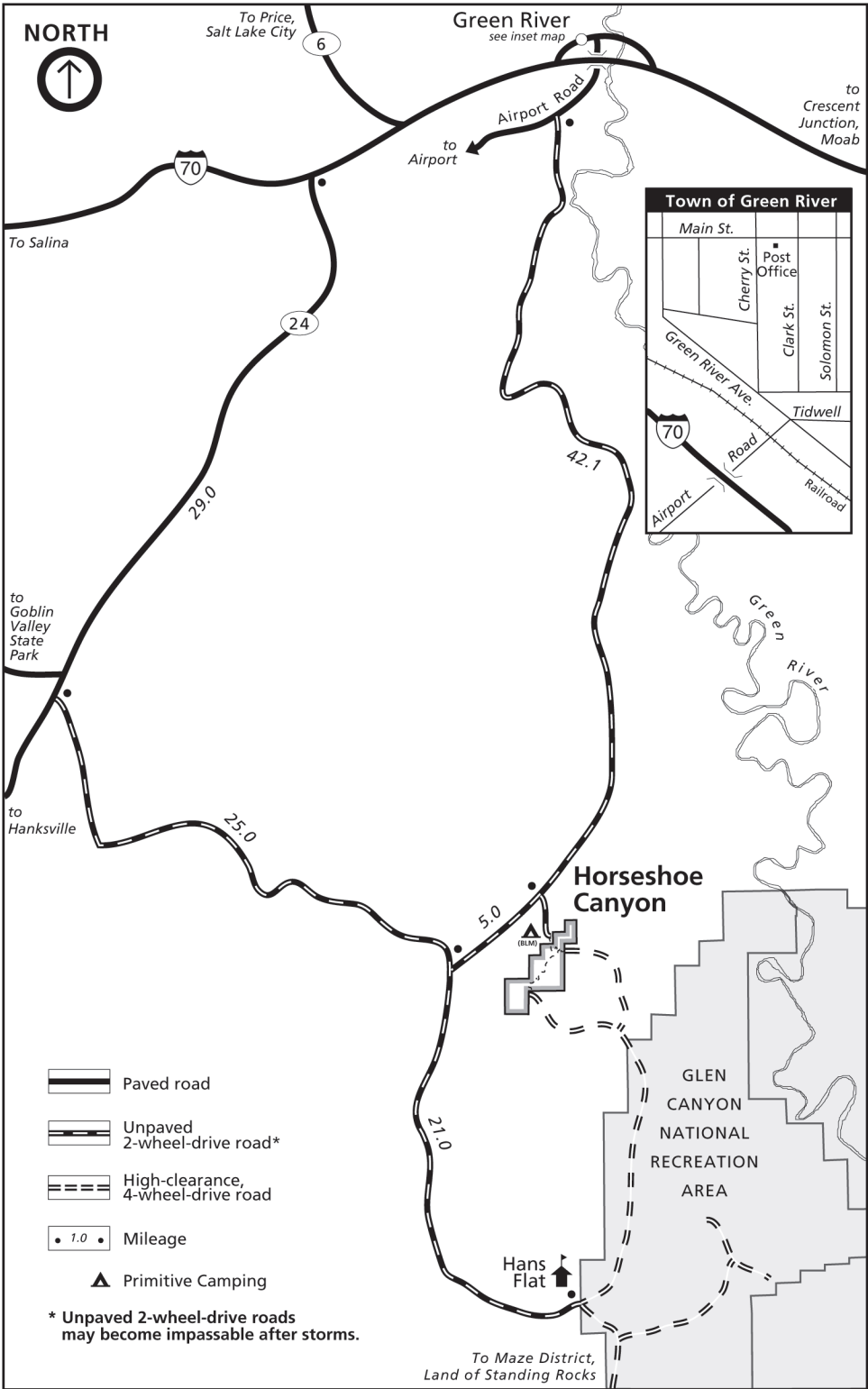
Guided Hikes

Rangers lead guided hikes in Horseshoe Canyon when staff are available. Contact Hans Flat Ranger Station at 435-259-2652, or visit www.nps.gov/cany for current schedules. You can arrange special hikes for educational or other large groups by contacting Hans Flat Ranger Station. Hikes usually depart the west rim parking lot at 9 am.

Map



The sheer sandstone walls of Horseshoe Canyon



How to Get There

Do not use a GPS to get to Horseshoe Canyon—use a map instead. Two-wheel drive vehicles can get to Horseshoe Canyon via a 30-mile graded dirt road off UT 24 or a 47-mile dirt road from Green River. Drive 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 Hans Flat Ranger Station. All roads may become impassable during storms. For road conditions, call Hans Flat Ranger Station at 435-259-2652 between 8 am and 4:30 pm, or visit go.nps.gov/canyroads. Most visitors reach the canyon from the west side.

More Information

Maps of Horseshoe Canyon include the Trails Illustrated series topographic map for Canyonlands National Park (The Maze & NE Glen Canyon), and the USGS 7.5-minute series Sugarloaf Butte topographic map. You can purchase these maps and other publications from Canyonlands Natural History Association at 435-259-6003, or online at www.cnha.org.

Additional Reading
Cowboy Cave Jennings, 1980, 223pp.
Glen Canyon Revisited Geib, 1996, 223 pp.
Indian Rock Art of the Southwest Schaafsma, 1980, 379pp.
Legacy on Stone Cole, 1990, 279pp.
Prehistory of Utah and the Eastern Great Basin Jennings, 1978, 263 pp.
Rock Art of Utah Schaafsma, 1971, 170pp.
Sacred Images Kelen & Sucec, 1996, 112pp.



Island in the Sky District Trails and Roads

Paved road/
Pull out

Unpaved
2-wheel-drive road

High-clearance,
4-wheel-drive road

Hiking Trail

At-large
Backpacking Zone

Name

Name of
Backpacking Zone

Boat Launch

Ranger Station

Picnic Area

Developed Campground

Backcountry Vehicle Camp

Designated Backpacking Site

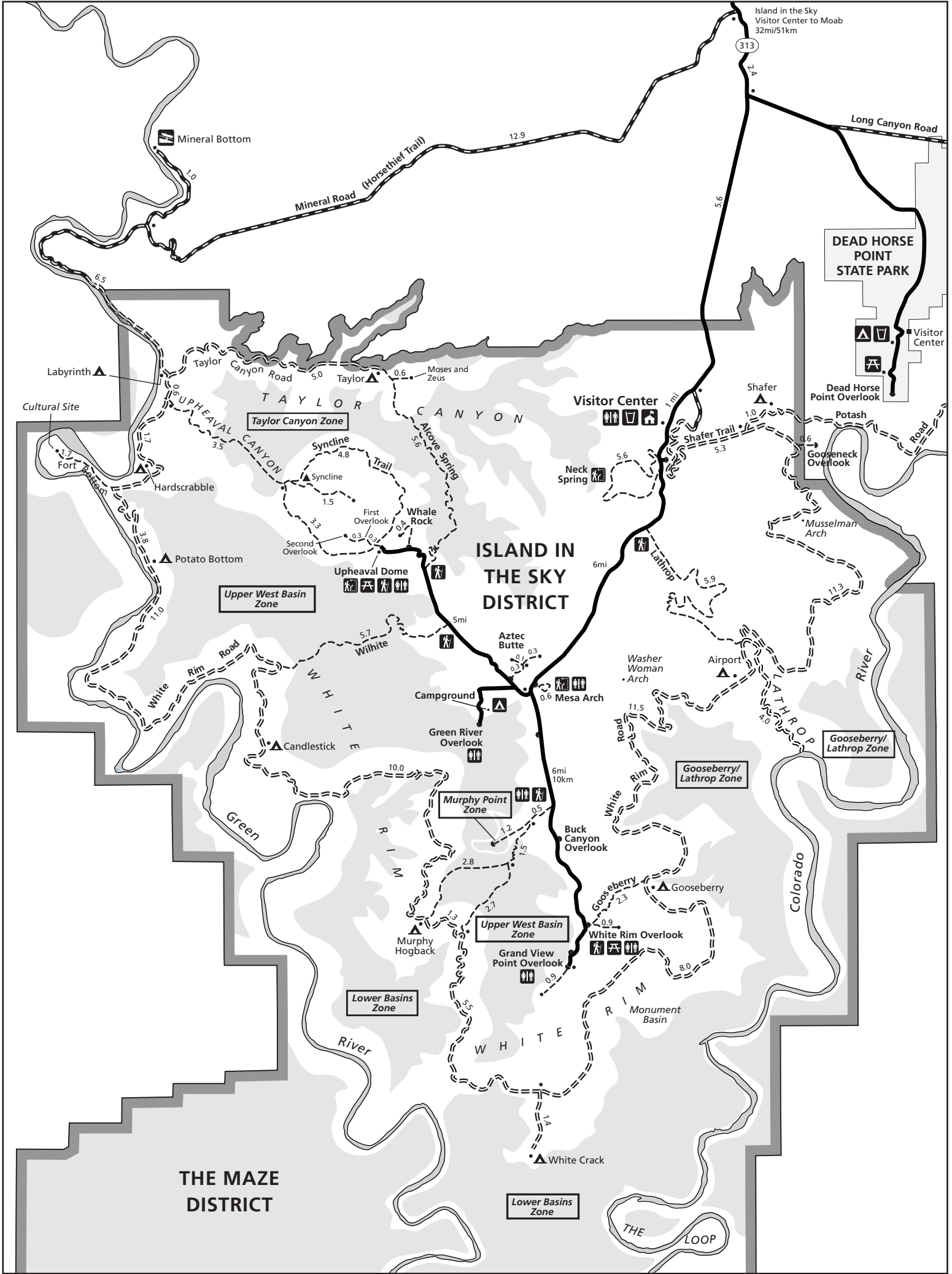
Drinking Water Available

Self-guiding Trail

Backcountry Trailhead Parking

Toilet

NOTE: White shading within Canyonlands indicates areas with designated site camping only.



Interpretive Activities	VISITOR CENTER	INTERPRETIVE TALKS AND GUIDED WALKS
	Open daily March through December, 9 am to 4 pm, with extended hours in summer. Exhibits, information, permits, video presentation, booksales, and water for sale. Call 435-259-4712 to verify hours.	Presented daily March through October. Locations, times, and topics vary. A program schedule and description of activities is posted at the visitor center, campground, and entrance station.



Hiking Trails

Trails are marked with cairns (small rock piles). Do not disturb existing cairns or build new ones. Signs are located at trailheads and intersections. All trails leading below the mesa top are primitive and rough. There is no potable water along any hiking trails. Drinking water is available spring through fall at the visitor center.

	Round-Trip Distance	Round-Trip Hiking Time	One-way Elevation Change	Description
Mesa Top (Easy Trails)				
Mesa Arch	0.6 mi / 1 km	30 minutes	56 ft / 17 m	good for sunrise, arch on cliff edge
Murphy Point Overlook	3.4 mi / 5.5 km	2 hours	142 ft / 43 m	panoramic view w/ Henry Mtns
White Rim Overlook	1.8 mi / 2.9 km	1.5 hour	159 ft / 49 m	view of potholes, White Rim Road
Grand View Point	1.8 mi / 2.9 km	1.5 hours	73 ft / 22 m	panoramic view along cliff edge
Mesa Top (Moderate Trails)				
Neck Spring	5.6 mi / 9 km	3 - 4 hours	418 ft / 127 m	springs, evidence of ranching
Aztec Butte	1.4 mi / 2.3 km	1.5 hours	222 ft / 68 m	steep slickrock to top, structures
Whale Rock	0.8 mi / 1.3 km	1 hour	141 ft / 35 m	bare slickrock, good views
Upheaval Dome				
to first overlook	0.6 mi / 1 km	1 hour	115 ft / 35 m	view into crater
to second overlook	1.2 mi / 1.9 km	1.5 hours	114 ft / 35 m	crater & Upheaval Canyon view
Mesa Top to White Rim (Steep & Strenuous Trails)				
Lathrop				
to Canyon Rim	5 mi / 8 km	2-3 hours	158 ft / 48 m	trail crosses open grasslands to views
to White Rim Road	11.8 mi / 19 km	5- 7 hours	1,721 ft / 525 m	views of Colorado River & La Sals
Murphy Loop	10.8 mi / 17.4 km	5 - 7 hours	1,448 ft / 441 m	panoramic view from hogback
Gooseberry	4.6 mi / 7.4 km	4 - 6 hours	1,529 ft / 466 m	views of cliffs & La Sal Mtns
Wilhite	11.4 mi / 18.3 km	6 - 8 hours	1,693 ft / 516 m	slot cyn across White Rim Road
Alcove Spring	11.2 mi / 18 km	6 - 7 hours	1,455 ft / 444 m	large alcove, views of Taylor Cyn
Syncline Loop	8.1 mi / 13 km	5 - 7 hours	1,516 ft / 462 m	canyon hiking, some shade
Upheaval Crater spur	3 mi / 4.8 km	2 hours	350 ft / 107 m	some scrambling over rocks
Upheaval Canyon spur	7 mi / 11.2 km	3 - 4 hours	400 ft / 122 m	sandy hike along wash bottom
Trails along the White Rim Road				
Gooseneck Overlook	0.6 mi / 1 km	30 minutes	98 ft / 30 m	excellent view of Colorado River
Fort Bottom Trail	3.4 mi / 5.5 km	2 hours	418 ft / 128 m	tower structure from ancient times
Moses and Zeus	1.3 mi /2.1 km	1 hour	717 ft / 219 m	views of Taylor Cyn, climbing routes

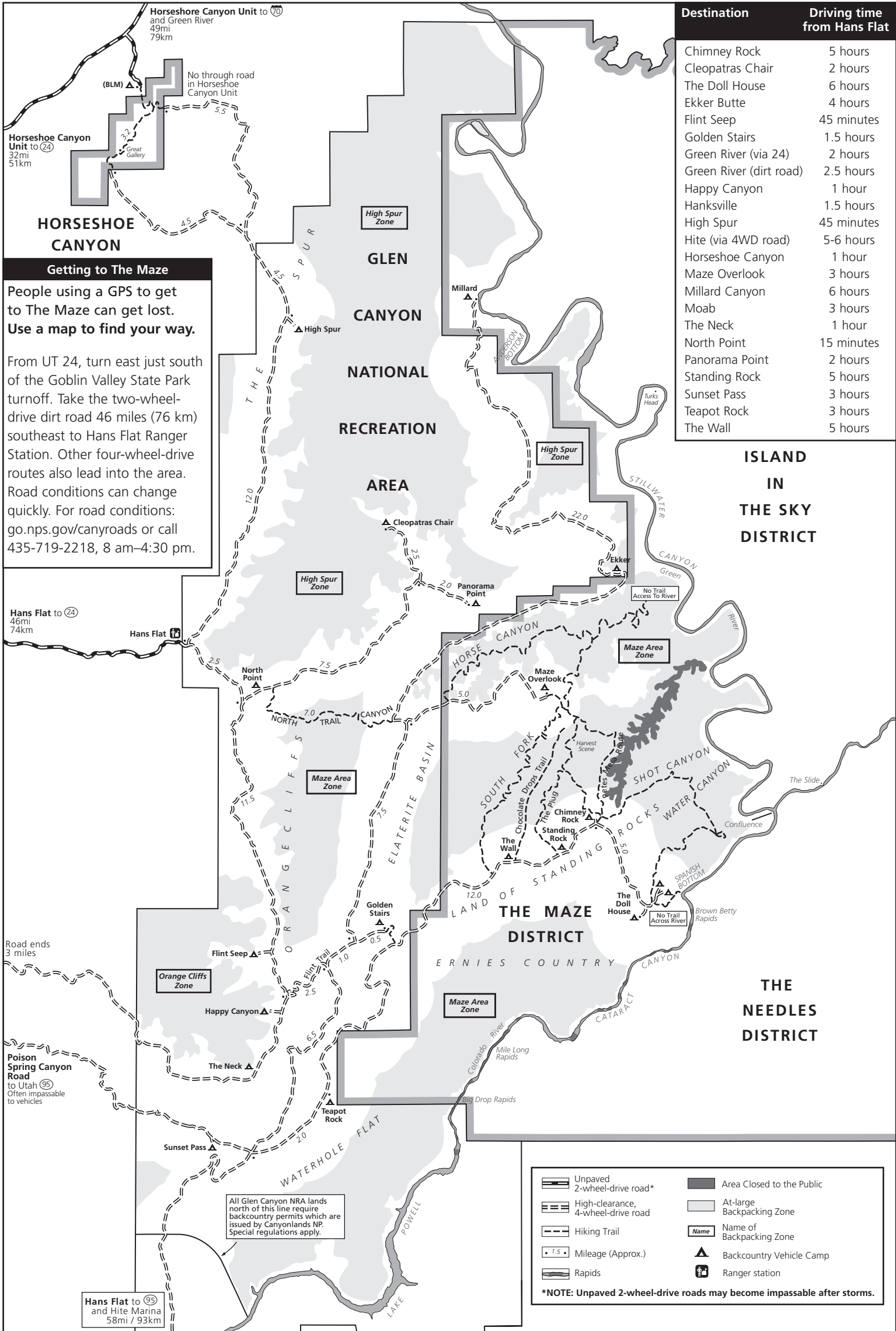
Travelling with Pets

Activities with pets are limited. Pets must be on leash at all times when outside a vehicle.	Leashed pets are allowed:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• along front-country roads or parking areas• in front-country campgrounds and picnic areas• in your vehicle on the Potash/Shافر Canyon road between Moab and Island in the Sky
The desert can be deadly for pets left in cars. You should not leave pets in the car when temperatures exceed 65°F (18°C), even with the windows open.	Pets are not allowed:
Service animals that have been individually trained to perform specific task(s) for the benefit of an individual with a disability are allowed in the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• on any hiking trails even if carried• at any overlooks• in the visitor center or any building• anywhere in the backcountry (including vehicles on backcountry roads, and on any river trips)

<div>Backcountry Reservations</div> <div>Backcountry Permit Office</div> <div>2282 Resource Blvd.</div> <div>Moab, UT 84532</div> <div>Phone: (435)259-4351</div> <div>go.nps.gov/canybackcountry</div> <div>For More Information</div> <div>Canyonlands National Park</div> <div>2282 Resource Blvd.</div> <div>Moab, UT 84532</div> <div>(435)719-2313</div> <div>Web www.nps.gov/cany</div> <div>Social Media @CanyonlandsNPS</div>	<div>Protect Your Park</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not enter, alter, damage or deface archeological sites. Do not collect artifacts.• Vehicles and bikes must stay on roads.• ATVs and OHVs are not permitted.• Protect biological soil crust by staying on trails and roads.• Permits are required for all overnight backcountry trips.</div>	<div>Protect Yourself</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink at least one gallon (4 L) of water each day. Be sure to eat food as well.• Always carry a topo map, adequate clothing, and a flashlight.• Remain in one place if you become lost or separated from a group.• Never cross a canyon that is flooding.• During lightning storms, avoid lone trees, cliff edges and high ridges. Return to your vehicle if possible.• Be careful near cliff edges, especially when rock surfaces are wet or icy.</div>
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The Maze and Orange Cliffs Unit



Introduction

Because of its isolation and challenging roads, The Maze is the least visited district of Canyonlands National Park. Travel to The Maze requires the right vehicle, more time, and a greater degree of self-sufficiency. You should be prepared for self-rescue. Most people spend at least three days at The Maze, but trips can easily last a week.

The Orange Cliffs Unit of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area shares Canyonlands’ western boundary and is administered under the same backcountry management plan and reservation system. Regulations are the same for The Maze and Orange Cliffs, though they differ in the rest of Glen Canyon.

More Information:
Hans Flat Ranger Station
phone 435-719-2218
Note: Unless it is an emergency,
please call only 8 am–4:30 pm.
website go.nps.gov/themaze

Hans Flat Ranger Station is two hours from Green River, Utah. From I-70, take UT 24 south for 24 miles (38 km). A left turn just beyond the Goblin Valley State Park turnoff will take you along a two-wheel-drive dirt road 46 miles (76 km) southeast to the ranger station. This road may require four-wheel drive after wind or rain. In addition, a four-wheel-drive route leads north from UT 95 near Hite.

Do not use GPS to find your way; use a map instead.

The Hans Flat Ranger Station is open daily from 8 am–4:30 pm.

Hiking Trails

Trails in The Maze are steep, unmarked, and minimally maintained. Route finding may be difficult. The Maze Overlook Trail and other routes in the district require basic climbing maneuvers in order to negotiate sections of steep slickrock and pour-offs. A 25-foot (7.6 m) length of rope is often essential for raising or lowering packs in difficult spots. If you have a fear of heights, many routes may make you uncomfortable. Routes into the canyons have a few cairns from mesa top to canyon bottom, but routes in washes are not marked. Many of the canyons look alike and are difficult to identify without a topographic map.

Most routes begin at trailheads along four-wheel-drive roads. If you have a two-wheel-drive vehicle, you may park at the North Point Road junction, approximately 2.5 miles (4 km) southeast of Hans Flat Ranger Station, and hike to Maze Overlook via North Trail Canyon. Depending on your vehicle, you may also be able to negotiate the 14-mile road



(22 km) to park at the top of the Flint Trail, then hike to Land of Standing Rocks.

Overnight trips require a permit, which you can reserve in advance. Backpackers stay in at-large zones. There are several reliable springs in the canyons of The Maze. Inquire at Hans Flat Ranger Station for more information.

Four-Wheel-Drive Roads

Four-wheel driving in The Maze is extremely difficult, presents considerable risk of vehicle damage, and should not be attempted by inexperienced drivers. You must have a high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle for all Maze backcountry roads. ATVs and OHVs are prohibited. The Flint Trail traverses slopes of clay that are extremely slippery when wet. The Flint Trail is often closed in winter.

The road between Teapot Rock camp and Land of Standing Rocks is the most difficult in The Maze, with additional clearance or locking differentials highly recommended. You should be prepared to make basic road or vehicle repairs and should carry the following items: at least one full-size spare tire, extra gas, extra water, a shovel, a high-lift jack, and chains for all four tires between October and April.



All overnight trips require a permit, which you can reserve in advance. Backcountry vehicle campers and mountain bike groups must stay in designated sites and **must** provide their own toilet systems. Vehicle sites do not have any toilets or picnic tables.



Protect Your Park

- Pets are not allowed on hiking trails or on four-wheel-drive roads, even in a vehicle.
- Do not enter, alter, damage, or deface archeological sites. Do not collect artifacts.
- All vehicles and bicycles must stay on designated roads.
- ATVs and OHVs are not permitted.
- Protect biological soil crusts by staying on trails and roads.
- Wood fires are prohibited.



Protect Yourself

- Drink one gallon of water (4 L) each day.
- Always carry a topo map, adequate clothing, and a flashlight.
- Remain in one place if you become lost or separated from a group.
- Flash floods can occur without warning. Never cross a canyon that is flooding.
- During a lightning storm avoid lone trees, cliff edges, and high ridges. Return to your vehicle if possible.
- Be careful near cliff edges, especially when rock surfaces are wet or icy.

Canyonlands

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

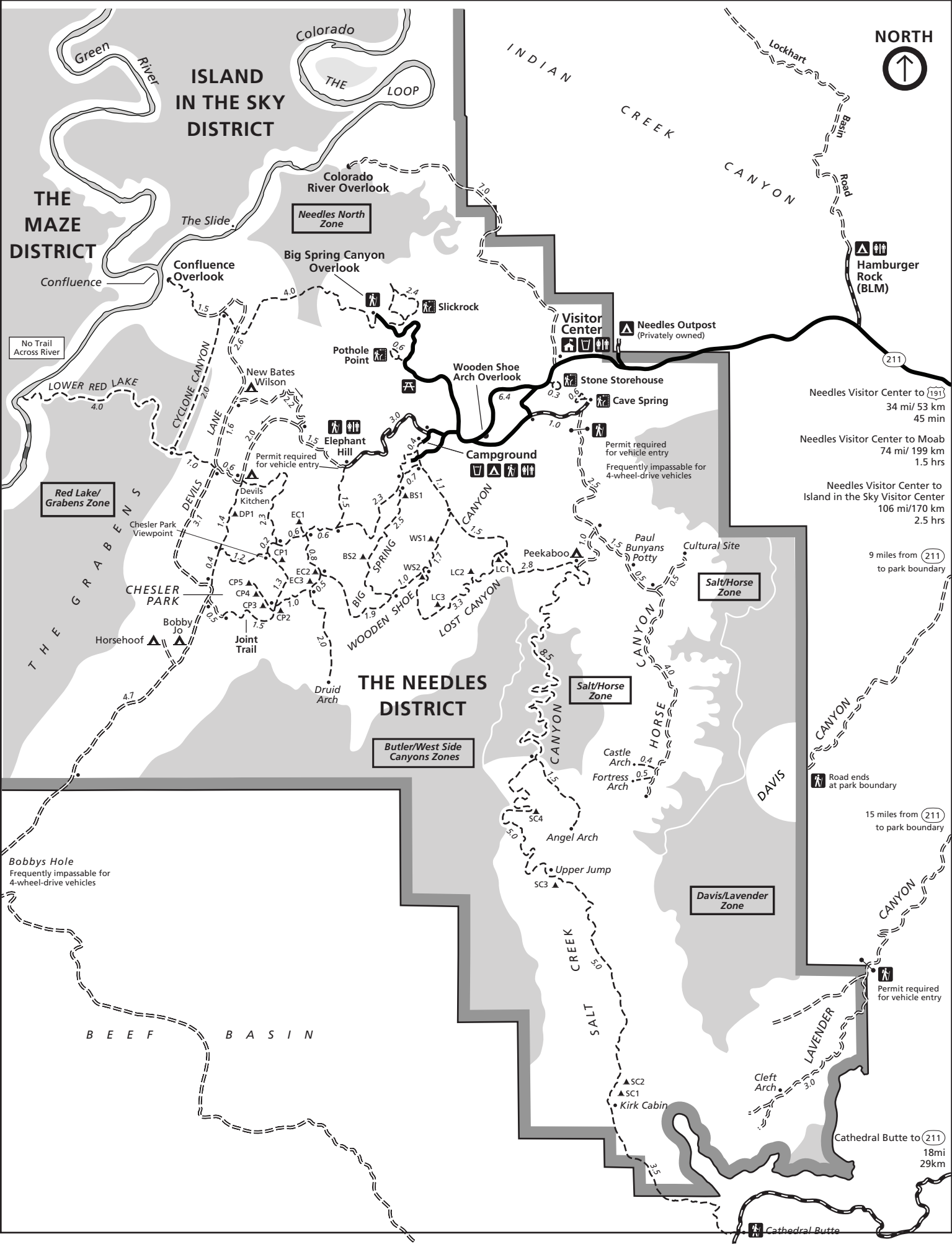
Canyonlands National Park



Needles District Trails and Roads

Overlook/ Paved road	High-clearance, 4-wheel-drive road	Rapids	Ranger Station	Developed Campground	Self-guiding Trail
Unpaved 2-wheel-drive road	Locked Gate	At-large Backpacking Zone	Picnic Area	Backcountry Vehicle Camp	Backcountry Trailhead Parking
	Hiking Trail	Name Name of Backpacking Zone	Drinking Water	Designated Backpacking Site	Toilet

NOTE: White shading within Canyonlands indicates areas with designated site camping only.



Hiking Trails

SHORT HIKES

Short on time? Four short, self-guiding interpretive trails highlight various aspects of the area's cultural and natural history. Trail guides are available in the visitor center and at trailheads for a nominal fee.

Stone Storehouse

0.3 mi/0.5 km, 20 minutes
Easy trail. Leads to a storage structure built by Indigenous people.

Cave Spring

0.6 mi/1 km, 45 minutes
Two ladders. Leads to historic cowboy camp and prehistoric pictographs.

Pothole Point

0.6 mi/1 km, 45 minutes
Uneven surface. Leads to pothole communities, views of the Needles.

Slickrock Trail

2.4 mi/3.9 km, 1.5 hours
Uneven surface. Several viewpoints and sometimes bighorn sheep.

Over 60 miles of interconnecting trails present hikers with spectacular canyon scenery. Some of the more common routes are described below. Trails traverse a mixture of slickrock benches and sandy washes, and some may require negotiating steep, rocky passes with drop-offs, narrow areas, and ladders. Water sources are unreliable; carry all that you will need. Trails are marked with cairns (small rock piles) and signs at intersections.

ELEPHANT HILL TRAILHEAD Ç

Chesler Park Viewpoint

5.8 mi/9.3 km, 3-4 hrs round trip
This popular trail leads across to a pass overlooking a scenic expanse of desert grasses and shrubs surrounded by sandstone spires.

Chesler Park Loop / Joint Trail

10.7 mi/17.2 km, 5-7 hrs round trip
This loop travels beyond the viewpoint described above, providing great views of the Needles. The southern portion, called the Joint Trail, winds through deep, narrow fractures in the rock. A short segment follows the four-wheel-drive road.

Druid Arch

10.8 mi/17.4 km, 5-7 hrs round trip
This trail offers one of the most spectacular views in the Needles. It follows the first part of the Chesler Park trail, then branches off to travel along the bottom of Elephant Canyon through deep sand and loose rock. The last 0.25 mile at the upper end is steep with one ladder and some scrambling.

BIG SPRING CANYON TRAILHEAD Ç

Confluence Overlook

11 mi/17.7 km, 5-6 hrs round trip
Unlike other Needles hikes, this trail traverses open country along the northern edge of the geologic faults that shaped the Needles. Trail ends at a cliff overlooking the junction of the Green and Colorado rivers 1,000 feet below.

CAMPGROUND LOOP “A” TRAILHEAD Ç

Big Spring Canyon to Wooden Shoe Canyon

7.5 mi/12 km, 3-4 hrs round trip
A great introduction to the landscape of the Needles, connecting two canyons for a loop across varied terrain. The route between the canyons climbs steep grades that are dangerous when wet. Not for those with a fear of heights.

Big Spring Canyon to Elephant Canyon

10.5 mi/16.9 km, 4-6 hrs round trip
This loop features extended hiking on slickrock benches and mesa tops overlooking canyons. Excellent views of sheer cliff walls and other rock formations. Two ladders must be climbed in the pass between the canyons.

Wooden Shoe Canyon to Lost Canyon

8.7 mi/14 km, 4-6 hrs round trip
Another wonderful loop hike with some difficult sections climbing between the two canyons. Riparian areas in both canyons attract birds and other wildlife. Route in Lost Canyon passes through dense vegetation and may be very wet. One ladder must be climbed.

Peekaboo

10.8 mi/17.4 km, 5-6 hrs round trip
Trail crosses both Wooden Shoe and Lost canyons on the way to Salt Creek Canyon, passing high scenic slickrock benches. Steep slopes and nearby cliff edges make this route challenging. Two ladders must be climbed. Prehistoric rock markings may be seen at the end of the trail near Peekaboo camp.

Four-Wheel-Drive Roads

Over 50 miles of challenging backcountry roads access campsites, trailheads, and park attractions. All vehicles and bikes must remain on designated roads. All of these roads require high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles. Drive carefully: the risk of vehicle damage is great and towing expenses typically exceed \$1,000.

Elephant Hill D*

One of the most technical four-wheel-drive roads in Utah, Elephant Hill presents drivers with steep grades, loose rock, stair-step drops, tight turns and backing. Over the hill, equally challenging roads lead to various campsites and trailheads, and BLM landsto the south. Challenging mountain biking.

Colorado Overlook D*

Moderate road, good for mountain bikes. Visitor may avoid large rocks and stair-step drops in the last 1.5 miles by parking on the road (leave room for others) and walking to the overlook. Outstanding views of the Colorado River Canyon. Unprotected overlook; use caution. No vehicle camping.

Horse Canyon / Peekaboo D

Permit required for day and overnight use. Roads travel along canyon bottoms where deep sand, water, and quicksand are common. Too sandy for mountain bikes. At Peekaboo, vehicle campsites are available and prehistoric rock markings may be seen. Horse Canyon road leads to several arches and cultural sites.

Lavender Canyon D

Permit required for day use. Road follows a canyon bottom where deep sand, water, and quicksand are common. Too sandy for mountain bikes. There are two major creek crossings with steep banks. Arches and Indigenous built structures may be viewed from the road. No vehicle camping in the park.

Backcountry Permits

Backcountry Permit Office
2282 Resource Blvd.
Moab, UT 84532
canyres@nps.gov
(435) 259-4351
go.nps.gov/canybackcountry

For More Information

Canyonlands National Park
2282 SW Resource Blvd.
Moab, UT 84532
(435) 719-2313
www.nps.gov/cany
Social Media @CanyonlandsNPS



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