Anyone who has traveled a river knows the value of the perfect campsite. A dry, waterside sandbar ideal for bare feet and a game of horseshoes. A highwater camp graced by shade-giving cottonwood trees that rustle and clap in the breeze.

When John Wesley Powell made his historic journey down the Green and Colorado rivers in 1869, he found good camps around every bend. Today’s river runners know that campsites are often limited, with access to shore blocked by an intimidating wall of vegetation.

What changed?

In the late 1800s, international commerce introduced many plants to the American Southwest. Some have been very successful, out-competing native desert plants for scarce water and soil. And without their natural predators and diseases, there’s little that keeps these populations in check.

One of the most successful plants is tamarisk or salt cedar (Tamarix chinensis). Abundant along western rivers, this shrub forms dense stands that are impenetrable to campers, hikers, mule deer, bighorn sheep...even light. Virtually nothing germinates in the dark, tangled undergrowth of mature tamarisk. This plant also siphons water and traps sediment, narrowing river channels and reducing habitat for endangered fish.

Because it grows quickly and produces lots of seeds, tamarisk is difficult to control or eradicate; traditional methods like cutting and herbicides often fall short.

In 2001, after nearly 20 years of testing, the U.S. Department of Agriculture approved a non-traditional method: the release of a beetle (Diorhabda carinulata) that feeds exclusively on tamarisk leaves. Without leaves, a plant can’t feed itself and will eventually die. The State of Utah released the first beetles near Moab in 2004. The beetles quickly spread up and down the Colorado River and into Canyonlands.

After the beetles have done their work, dying tamarisk remains a threat. It’s highly flammable, creating a hazard to anyone (or anything) living or recreating near the river. With the help of your fee dollars, park scientists are beginning an extensive program to remove dying tamarisk (along with other invasive plants) in order to foster greater plant diversity along the rivers.

Starting in March 2013, park staff and volunteers will be working on the rivers, cutting dead tamarisk and creating fire breaks around stands of native vegetation like cottonwoods, box elders and willows. The fire breaks will protect those plants and limit the ability of fires to spread. Crews will also clear campsites along the banks and create paths for hikers and wildlife.

This project is just a start. We may never eliminate non-native plants from Canyonlands, but hopefully we can restore some balance to our plant communities. As stewards, the National Park Service seeks to provide a safe, healthy environment where native plants and animals can flourish. We also want you to enjoy plentiful campsites during your trip down the rivers.

In this case, we’re fortunate that these two goals overlap.
CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK PRESERVES

337,598 acres of colorful canyons, mesas, buttes, fins, arches and spires in the heart of southeast Utah’s high desert. Water and gravity have been the prime architects of this land, sculpting layers of sedimentary rock into the rugged landscape seen today.

The park is divided into four districts by the Green and Colorado rivers: the Island in the Sky, the Maze, the Needles, and the rivers themselves. While the districts share a primitive desert atmosphere, each retains its own character and offers different opportunities for exploration and adventure.

There are no roads within the park that directly link the districts. They may appear close on a map, but traveling between them requires two to six hours by car as there are few places to cross the Colorado and Green rivers. Most people find it impractical to visit more than one or two districts in a single trip.

Your First Visit to Canyonlands

If you have half a day
Driving to Canyonlands requires at least an hour from nearby towns, so even a brief visit takes almost half a day. The Island in the Sky best accommodates these quick trips, with lots of overlooks and several short (2 miles or less) trails that provide a great introduction to the park. Adventurous drivers can return to Moab via the Shafer Trail (4WD recommended).

If you have a full day
With a full day, visitors can choose between the Island in the Sky or Needles districts. Spending a day in either area allows time for further exploration by foot, bike or four-wheel-drive vehicle. Horseshoe Canyon is another popular destination for day trips, though the trailhead is a two-hour drive from Moab.

If you have several days
A visit of several days allows people to experience more fully the wonders of Canyonlands. Multi-day trips include mountain biking the White Rim Road, backpacking in the Needles, four-wheel-driving in the Maze, and boating the Colorado and Green Rivers. Visits to the Maze and the rivers typically include at least three nights.

If you have a week
Week-long backcountry trips are possible in every district. Most private river trips through Cataract Canyon require a week. Visitors can also use the Squaw Flat and Willow Flat campgrounds as base camps for day trips throughout the Needles and Island in the Sky.
General Information

INFORMATION CENTERS
Canyonlands maintains visitor centers in each district. Outside the park, Blanding (on Highway 191), Moab (at the corner of Center and Main Streets) and Monticello (in the Frontier Museum, corner of Highway 191 and 200 South) have information centers with knowledgeable staff, brochures and maps.

GETTING AROUND
There is no public transportation to or within Canyonlands. A list of commercial tour operators is available on our website.

FEES
Fees are charged for park entrance, camping and backcountry permits. Eighty percent of the fees collected at Canyonlands are returned to the park to address priority needs in maintenance, infrastructure, resource management and visitor services. The following fees are in effect for Canyonlands:
• Entrance: $10/vehicle, $5/individual
• Interagency Annual Pass: $80
• Local Annual Pass: $25
• Developed Campgrounds:
  - Squaw Flat (Needles) - $15/night
  - Willow Flat (Island in the Sky) - $10/night
• Group Sites (Needles) - $3/person/night

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS
Evening programs and overlook talks are offered April through October. Schedules are posted at visitor centers and campgrounds.

CAMPING
Canyonlands offers many camping opportunities. There are campgrounds in both the Needles and Island in the Sky districts. These campgrounds offer toilets, picnic tables and fire rings. Sites are first-come, first-served. Maximum RV length is 28 feet in most sites.

BACKCOUNTRY PERMITS
All overnight travel in the backcountry requires a permit. Permits are issued at district visitor centers and at the Reservation Office in Moab. For more information, visit our website or request a copy of our Backcountry Trip Planner.

RESERVATIONS
Canyonlands accepts reservations for backcountry permits, group campsites in the Needles and day-use permits for Salt/Horse and Lavender canyons. Reservations are not accepted for individual sites at the main campgrounds.

FOOD, LODGING & OTHER SERVICES
Food, lodging and other amenities are not available in Canyonlands. These may be found in all nearby towns.

ACCESSIBILITY
At the Island in the Sky, visitors with mobility impairments can access the visitor center and restrooms, Buck Canyon Overlook, Green River Overlook and Grand View Point Overlook. In the Needles, the visitor center, restrooms, Square Flat Campground and Wooden Shoe Overlook are wheelchair accessible. Other points of interest are accessible with some assistance.

TRAVELING WITH PETS
Activities with pets are very limited at Canyonlands. Pets are not allowed on hiking trails, at overlooks or anywhere in the backcountry. Pets may not accompany groups traveling by four-wheel-drive vehicle, mountain bike or boat. Pets may accompany visitors in the developed campgrounds, and may be walked in the park along paved roads. Pets may also accompany visitors traversing the Potash/Shaffer Canyon road between Moab and the Island in the Sky. Pets must be leashed at all times when outside a vehicle.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE
Canyonlands experiences wide temperature fluctuations, sometimes over 40 degrees in a single day. Summer temperatures often exceed 100 F. Late summer monsoon season brings violent storm cells which often cause flash floods. Winters (November through March) are cold, with highs averaging 30 to 50 F, and lows averaging 0 to 20 F.

EMERGENCY!
Any number of emergencies can occur while you are visiting the park: hiking accidents, medical emergencies or perhaps you have locked your keys in your vehicle. If you have an emergency:
• Contact a park employee. Many park rangers are trained emergency medical technicians. Law enforcement rangers can investigate vehicle accidents, handle other police matters, as well as take reports of lost hikers, fires, or other emergencies.
• Go to the visitor center. If the building is closed, use the phone in front of the building to dial 911 (no coin is needed).
• If service is available, dial 911 on your cell phone. However, there are many areas without coverage in Canyonlands.

Thirsty?
Drinking plenty of water keeps you safe in the desert. Help protect the national parks and the planet by refilling your water bottles at the following locations:
• Island in the Sky Visitor Center (outside)
• Needles Visitor Center (water fountain)
• Square Flat Campground

Off the Beaten Track

HORSESHOE CANYON
Horseshoe Canyon contains several intriguing rock art panels, including “The Great Gallery,” which features remarkable life-sized figures and intricate designs. Other highlights include spring wildflowers, sheer sandstone walls and shady cottonwood groves. Visiting every rock art panel involves a round-trip hike of seven miles, so a trip to Horseshoe Canyon usually requires a full day. For more information, visit http://go.nps.gov/horseshoecanyon.

THE MAZE
The Maze is the least accessible district of Canyonlands. Due to its remoteness and the difficulty of roads and trails, travel to the Maze requires more time, as well as a greater degree of self-sufficiency. Rarely do visitors spend less than three days in the Maze, and the area can easily absorb a week-long trip. For more information, visit http://go.nps.gov/themaze or request a copy of our Backcountry Trip Planner.

THE RIVERS
The Colorado and Green rivers wind through the heart of Canyonlands, cutting through layers of sandstone to form two deep canyons. The calm waters of these two rivers join at the Confluence, below which their combined flow spills down Cataract Canyon with remarkable speed and power, creating a world-class stretch of white water. For more information, visit http://go.nps.gov/canyonrivers or request a copy of our Backcountry Trip Planner.

Canyonlands Visitor Guide 3
Island in the Sky

THE ISLAND IN THE SKY MESA RESTS ON SHEER SANDSTONE CLIFFS OVER 1,000 FEET ABOVE THE SURROUNDING TERRAIN. EVERY OVERLOOK OFFERS A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE PARK’S SPECTACULAR LANDSCAPE. THE ISLAND IS THE EASIEST DISTRICT TO VISIT IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, OFFERING MANY PULLOUTS WITH SPECTACULAR VIEWS ALONG THE PAVED SCENIC DRIVE. HIKING TRAILS AND FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE ROADS ACCESS BACKCOUNTRY AREAS FOR DAY OR OVERNIGHT TRIPS.

LOCATION
To reach the Island, take U.S. Highway 191 to Utah Highway 313 (10 mi/16 km north of Moab, or 22 mi/35 km south of I-70) and then drive southwest 22 mi/35 km. Driving time to the visitor center from Moab is roughly 40 minutes, or an hour to Grand View Point.

BASICS
• Visitor center is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with extended hours during spring and fall. Features exhibits, book sales, audio-visual programs, backcountry permits, general information, and park rangers on duty.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR DAY
First, stop at the visitor center for current information on trails, roads, interpretive programs, weather, or to watch the park movie.

IF YOU HAVE 2 HOURS:
Drive to Grand View Point or Green River Overlook. Hike to Mesa Arch.

IF YOU HAVE 4 HOURS:
Drive to Grand View Point, Green River Overlook and Upheaval Dome. Hike the Grand View Point, Mesa Arch, and Upheaval Dome Overlook trails.

IF YOU HAVE 8 HOURS:
Visit every overlook. Hike several mesa top trails or one of the more strenuous trails descending to the White Rim. Enjoy lunch on the trail or at White Rim Overlook or Upheaval Dome picnic areas.

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The Needles

THE NEEDLES DISTRICT FORMS THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF CANYONLANDS and was named for the colorful spires of Cedar Mesa Sandstone that dominate the area. The district’s extensive trail system provides many opportunities for long day hikes and overnight trips.

LOCATION
On U.S. Highway 191, drive 40 miles (60 km) south of Moab or 14 miles (22 km) north of Monticello, then take Utah Highway 211 roughly 35 miles (56 km) west. Highway 211 ends in the Needles, and is the only paved road leading in and out of the area.

 BASICS
- Visitor center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily, with extended hours during spring and fall. Features exhibits, book and map sales, audio-visual programs, backcountry permits, general information, picnic area, and park rangers on duty.
- Water is available year-round at the visitor center and at the Squaw Flat Campground.
- Orientation movie: Wilderness of Rock is shown on request at the visitor center (15 minutes).
- Restrooms are available at the visitor center and Squaw Flat Campground (wheelchair accessible). There are vault toilets at Elephant Hill.
- Squaw Flat Campground has 26 sites available first-come, first-served. No hookups. Nightly fee is $15 per site.

SCENIC DRIVE
The scenic drive continues 6.5 miles past the visitor center, ending at Big Spring Canyon Overlook. Along the way are several pullouts for short hiking trails, viewpoints and a picnic area. Graded gravel roads lead to Cave Spring and the elephant hill trailhead, where there is a second picnic area. The Elephant Hill access road provides the best views of the Needles from a car (about one mile from the pavement).

INTERPRETIVE ACTIVITIES
- Interpretive trails (with printed guides) include Cave Spring, Pothole Point, Roadside Ruin and Slickrock.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR DAY
If you have 2 hours:
Drive to Big Spring Canyon Overlook and hike the Pothole Point trail along the way. Drive to a view of the Needles on the Elephant Hill access road.

If you have 4 hours:
Explore the scenic drive and graded dirt roads. Hike the Cave Spring, Pothole Point and Roadside Ruin trails or the longer Slickrock trail.

If you have 8 hours:
After exploring the scenic drive, hike to Chesler Park or around the Big Spring-Squaw Canyon loop. Enjoy lunch on the trail.

Take a Hike!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trail</th>
<th>Distance (round-trip)</th>
<th>Average Time</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadside Ruin</td>
<td>0.3mi/0.5km</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>A short trail leads to an ancestral Puebloan granary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cave Spring</td>
<td>0.6mi/1.0km</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>This short loop leads to a historic cowboy camp and prehistoric pictographs. Two ladders must be climbed to complete the route.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pothole Point</td>
<td>0.6mi/1.0km</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>Uneven slickrock leads to diverse pothole communities as well as views of the Needles. Trail follows canyons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slickrock</td>
<td>2.4mi/4km</td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
<td>This trail features several expansive viewpoints, and is a favorite for spotting Bighorn Sheep. Trail crosses uneven surfaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strenuous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Spring Canyon to Squaw Canyon</td>
<td>7.5mi/12km</td>
<td>3 - 4 hours</td>
<td>This trail connects two canyons for a loop across varied terrain. The route climbs steep grades and is not suggested to those with fear of heights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confluence Overlook</td>
<td>10mi/16.5km</td>
<td>5 - 6 hours</td>
<td>This trail traverses dry, open country along the northern edge of the Needles district. The trail ends at a cliff overlooking the junction of the Green and Colorado Rivers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peekaboo</td>
<td>10mi/16.5km</td>
<td>5 - 6 hours</td>
<td>Steep slopes and nearby cliff edges make this a challenging route. Spectacular views and two ladders lead to a prehistoric rock art panel near Peekaboo camp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Druid Arch</td>
<td>11mi/18km</td>
<td>5 - 7 hours</td>
<td>This trail follows the Chesler Park trail, then travels along Elephant Canyon through deep sand. Some scrambling and one ladder are required for this spectacular hike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesler Park Loop/Join Trail</td>
<td>11mi/18km</td>
<td>5 - 7 hours</td>
<td>This trail provides many great panoramas of the Needles formations. The Joint Trail winds through deep, narrow fractures in the rock.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOR KIDS
Free Junior Ranger booklets are available at the visitor center. Kids age 5 and up can earn a Junior Ranger badge by completing four or more activities. The Cave Spring and Pothole Point trails are both popular hikes with kids. Before you set out, check out a kids’ master explorer pack from the visitor center. Packs include an activity guide, binoculars, hand lens and more.

FOR KIDS
- During spring and fall, campfire programs are presented nightly at the Squaw Flat Campground. Check at the visitor center or campground for topics and times.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR DAY
First, stop at the visitor center for current information on trails, roads, interpretive programs, weather, or to watch the park movie.

If you are interested in watching sunrise/sunset:
Find out sunrise and sunset times at the visitor center. Sunrise is spectacular from the campground area, especially along the short trail over the butte between Loops A and B. Visit Pothole Point or Wooden Shoe Arch Overlook as the glow of sunset washes over the Needles.

Watch Your Step

Biological soil crusts are an important part of the ecosystem in canyon country. They prevent erosion, absorb water and provide nutrients to plants.

Crusts grow very slowly as living organisms bind soil particles together. Biological soil crust can be invisible in the early stages of its growth. Mature crusts appear lumpy, like miniature canyons or castles, and are often draped in colorful lichens.

One step can destroy hundreds of years of growth. Please help us protect crusts by walking on designated trails, bare rock or streambeds.

To learn more and view a collection of photos, visit http://go.nps.gov/solcrust.
**Doing our Part**

“The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.”

– From the Organic Act of 1916, which created the National Park Service

This mission influences everything we do at Canyonlands. As we learn more about the park’s relationship with the outside world, achieving the mission becomes more complicated. Activities outside the park affect the lands within, and our actions alter the world outside. To address these relationships, Canyonlands National Park has established an Environmental Management System, or EMS.

The EMS seeks to make park operations, ranging from powering visitor centers to driving to remote areas of the park, more environmentally responsible. Something as simple as sharing a ride between park districts can save time, gas and money. Our EMS provides concrete ways to decrease our impacts such as:

- Reduce our waste production and divert more material away from the landfill through smart recycling.
- Reduce our fuel consumption by choosing appropriate types of vehicles to do our jobs and arranging carpools.
- Reduce greenhouse-gas production in our operations through renewable energy use and efficient buildings and equipment.

Additionally, our EMS helps us meet or exceed the requirements of executive orders and local, state and federal environmental laws. It also encourages us as individuals to conserve natural resources in our everyday jobs.

Our EMS helps us reduce our use of natural resources, tracks our operations’ impact on the environment around us (and saves the park a lot of money in the process). The system sets achievable goals, and allows us to track our progress. Our EMS is about more than just being “green.” It is a toolkit to help make our world a little better, a little safer, and a little cleaner. Through this EMS we move a step closer to ensuring our success at “providing for the enjoyment of these lands while leaving them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

**SAVE THE DATE**

Next year, Canyonlands will celebrate 50 years of inspiration, solitude and adventure. Be a part of it.

Watch the schedule of events unfold at www.nps.gov/cany.

PHOTO: PAUL DOWNEY/FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS

The Friends of Arches and the Canyonlands Parks

The Friends of Arches and the Canyonlands Parks: Bates Wilson Legacy Fund provides direct support to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks and to Natural Bridges and Hovenweep National Monuments in order to enhance existing projects in these spectacular areas, and to conserve the land and its cultural treasures for present and future generations to enjoy.

This mission honors the legendary work of Superintendent Bates Wilson, who came to Arches in 1949, inspiring and leading the effort that resulted in Canyonlands National Park being established in 1964. He is regarded by many as the “Father of Canyonlands.”

Bates Wilson firmly believed that:

- The park visitor must have a great experience;
- Exploratory and educational opportunities must abound;
- Preservation is our obligation to future generations;
- Youth indeed are the future: Bates enhanced the lives of countless young people as they explored and learned to appreciate the parks with him.

Please visit www.bateswilson.org to learn more and make your donation.

Thanks!

**Canyonlands National History Association (CNHA)**

(CNHA) sells hundreds of items about Canyonlands National Park and the rest of Utah’s canyon country. Visit their outlets in park visitor centers and the Moab Information Center (corner of Center & Main in Moab).

**BECOME A MEMBER**

CNHA members enjoy many benefits, including a 15% discount on purchases of $1 or more. For more information, please call us or visit our website at www.cnha.org.

Your purchase supports Canyonlands National Park.

**Hiking Canyonlands and Arches National Parks #3667**

The most comprehensive guide available to the trails and backcountry roads in these parks. Invaluable information about trip planning and NPS regulations. Photos and maps. 226 pp.

**Best Easy Day Hikes Canyonlands and Arches National Parks #1392**

A handy, pocket-sized trail guide with descriptions and maps of twenty-one short hikes in these two parks. 88 pp.

**Canyonlands Trails Illustrated Map #685**

This topographic map lists roads, trails, campgrounds and many points of interest in the Needles, Island in the Sky, and Maze districts of the park.

**Wilderness of Rock (DVD) #2541**

A great introduction to the landscape of Canyonlands. This orientation video is shown in the park’s visitor centers. 15 minutes.

**Geology Unfolded Utah’s National Parks #3441**

A succinct and well-illustrated guide that answers the most often asked questions about the geology of Utah’s National Parks.

**CONTACT US**

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8 Canyonlands Visitor Guide