

Browns Canyon National Monument

For centuries, the rugged granite cliffs, colorful rock outcroppings and stunning mountain vistas of Browns Canyon National Monument have attracted visitors from around the world. The area's unusual geology and roughly 3,000-foot range in elevation support a diversity of life and a wealth of geological, ecological, riparian, cultural and historic resources.

The 21,589-acre Browns Canyon National Monument was designated on February 19, 2015. The Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service jointly manage the monument. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), through the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA), manages river-based recreation on the Arkansas River through Browns Canyon.

BLM Photo by Bob Wick

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For more Information

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area
307 W. Sackett Avenue
Salida, CO 81201
719-539-7289
<https://bit.ly/CPWArkansasHeadwaters>

BLM Royal Gorge Field Office
3028 East Main Street
Cañon City, CO 81212
719-269-8500
<https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/colorado/browns-canyon>

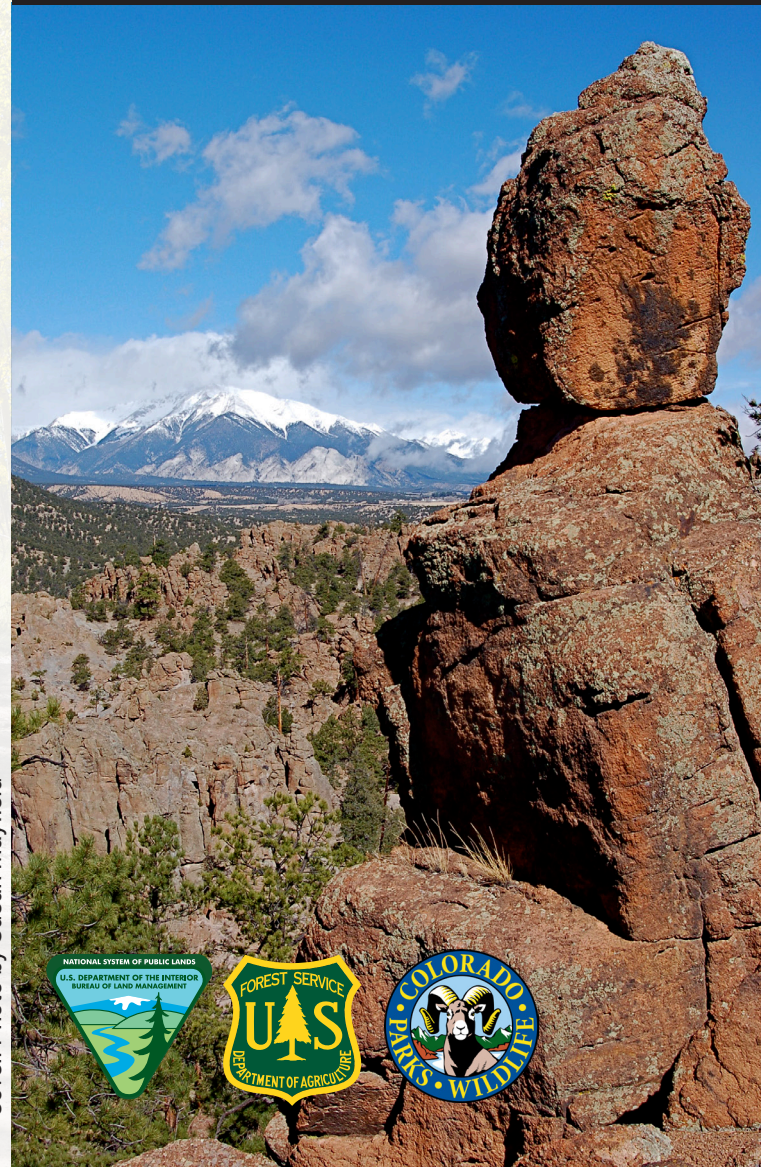
USFS Salida Ranger District
5575 Cleora Road
Salida, CO 81201
719-539-3591
<https://www.fs.fed.us/visit/browns-canyon-national-monument>

Browns Canyon does not have an onsite visitor center. Information and collectable "passport" stamp are available at the above locations.



BLM/CO/GI-21/002

Cover Photo by Susan Mayfield



BLM Photo by Kyle Sullivan



About National Monuments

National monuments are designated to protect, conserve and restore landscapes of tremendous beauty, diversity, and historic or scientific interest. The Antiquities Act of 1906 granted the President authority to designate national monuments to protect "objects of historic or scientific interest." While most national monuments are established by the President, Congress has occasionally established national monuments to protect natural or historic features. Since 1906, the President and Congress have created more than 100 national monuments managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Photo by CPW



Whitewater Activities

Whitewater boating is the most popular recreational activity that occurs in Browns Canyon. Through the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area partnership, Colorado Parks and Wildlife manages commercial and private boating through Browns Canyon along with all recreational use on the Arkansas River from the confluence of the Lake Fork and the East Fork of the Arkansas River to Lake Pueblo.

The Arkansas River is the most accessible way to enjoy the national monument. Depending on water levels, it can provide a mild or wild whitewater boating experience in the scenic canyon.

For more information on water flows and approved commercial outfitters visit <http://bit.ly/AHRABoating>

NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

Browns Canyon National Monument



The story of people living in the upper Arkansas River valley is told through sites and artifacts dating back 11,000 years. Within the monument, open campsites, prehistoric stone structures and evidence of seasonal camps remain, including rock shelter sites, among other features. These sites range from the Paleolithic (11,000 years before present) to the Late Prehistoric Period (from around 2,000 years ago to the 1700s). The cultural resources found in the monument provide a glimpse into the past and an opportunity to learn about our predecessors.

Discovery of gold near the Arkansas River in 1859 brought an influx of people to the area, along with the need for transportation. While the old Stagecoach Road provided a route to Leadville for many years, it was a rugged road and long trip. The arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad in 1880 created easier access to the booming mining area around Leadville. Many interesting historic prospecting sites can still be found throughout the monument.

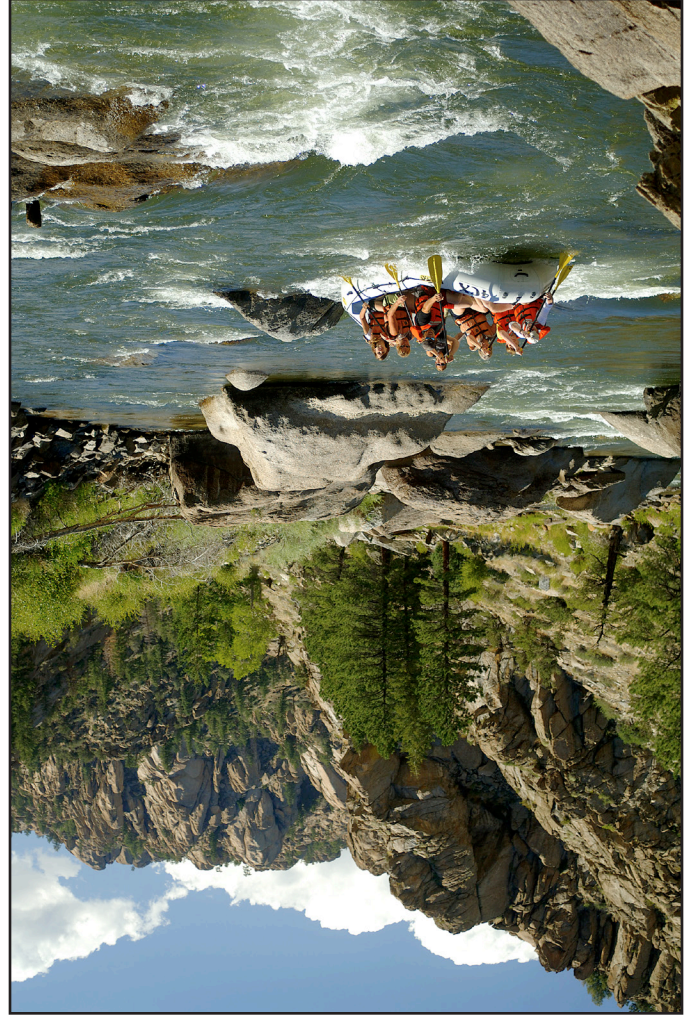


Photo © Tim Brown Photography

Browns Canyon has a rich cultural history that we are still investigating. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 prohibits removing, disturbing or defacing archaeological sites or artifacts on federal public lands.

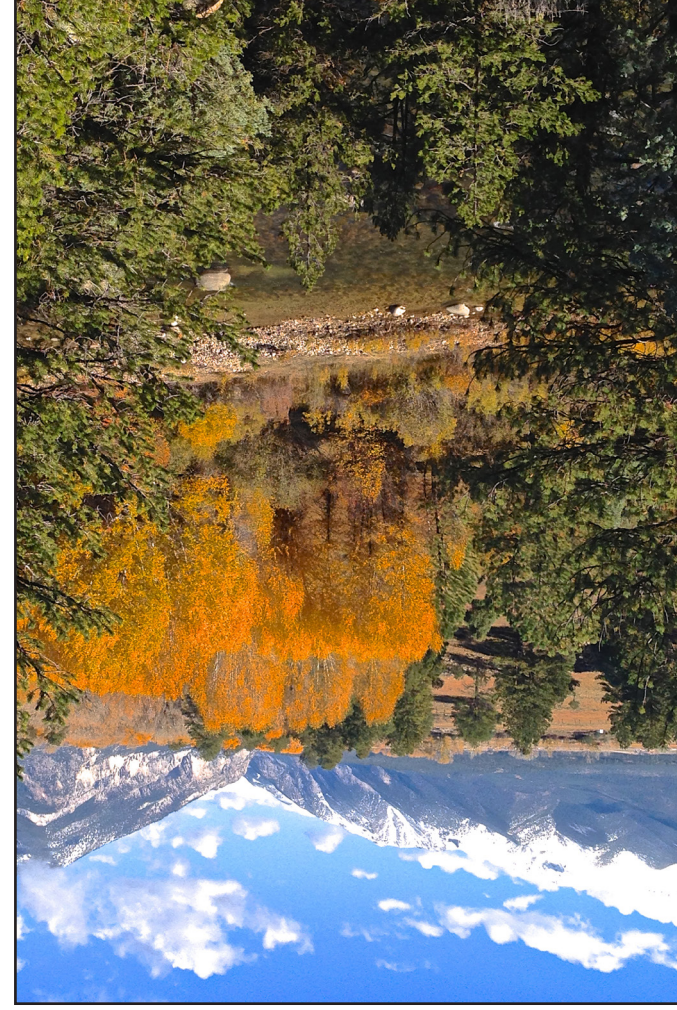


Photo by Susan Mayfield

Fishing

The Arkansas River within the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area is a world-class fishery with opportunities for anglers to test their skills at catching brown and rainbow trout. As a testament to the excellent fishery, Colorado Parks and Wildlife designated the Arkansas River from the confluence with the Lake Fork of the Arkansas River downstream to Parkdale, Colorado (102 miles), as a Gold Medal Trout Fishery in 2014. This addition to the Gold Medal registry is the

Follow the Leave No Trace principles and combine them with your personal judgment, awareness and experience to help protect natural and cultural resources ecosystems along the Arkansas River that remain relatively undisturbed. Riparian corridors provide important migration routes for birds and insects. A number of reptile and amphibian species are found in the area, including Woodhouse's toads, chorus frogs, bullsnakes, plains garter snakes, western rattlesnakes and short-horned lizards.



- Plan ahead and prepare.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
- Dispose of waste properly, including dog waste.
- Leave what you find.
- Minimize campfire impacts.
- Respect wildlife.
- Be considerate of other visitors.

For more information, visit <https://lnt.org/>

BLM Photo by Bob Wick



The plant community in this area has evolved since the Eocene Epoch (56-33.9 million years ago). Geologic changes since the Precambrian Era (4,600-541 million years ago) make the area an important site for research on paleoclimatology, the study of the climate history of Earth, and the effects of fire and other disturbances. The monument has many unique plant species including the endemic Brandegee's buckwheat, Fendler's Townsend daisy, Fendler's false cloak fern, Livermore fiddleneck, and the endemic Front Range alumroot.

Hiking Trails

Browns Canyon National Monument offers many excellent hikes of differing lengths. Be sure to carry enough water for the length of the hike you are planning and practice Leave No Trace principles, including picking up after your pet.

Ruby Mountain Trailhead:

Roundtrip to river via Little Cottonwood (#6045): 2.7 miles

A short but strenuous trek to the river. Please do not trespass on private property. Instead, follow the dry creek bed at Little Cottonwood Creek just before a flat river bench section of the main trail.

Roundtrip via the River Bench Trail (#6045A): 5.5 miles

After Little Cottonwood Creek, the main trail continues along a gentle, flat river bench. Take this route to continue along the river bench to an overlook of the Arkansas River.

Roundtrip via River Access Trail (#6045B): 9 miles

Continue on the main trail away from the river bench to experience varied terrain before taking this route to access the river. Return the same way.

Roundtrip including Catkin Gulch Loop (#6046): 11.5 miles

A full experience of the monument's wilderness character. Navigational tools and skills recommended.

Roundtrip to Forest Service Road 184 (#6045): 11 miles

Hike the main trail to the boundary of the Wilderness Study Area where it meets vehicle access at Turret Road.

Hecla Junction Trailhead (Hecla Junction Recreation Site):

Roundtrip via Arkansas River Trail: 2 miles

A family-friendly hike along the west bank of the river. During high water seasons, watch rafters navigate the notorious Seidel's Suckhole.

Bassam Park – Aspen Ridge Area Trailhead:

Roundtrip to Overlook via Hefley Saddle Trail (#1435) 2.5 miles

This trail is located outside of the Wilderness Study Area and is open to mountain biking. At an elevation of 9,500 ft., it remains relatively flat as it meanders through meadows, pines and aspen to stunning views.

A Nathrop area topographic map is recommended for any off-trail hiking: https://data.fs.usda.gov/geodata/rastergateway/data/38106/fstopo/383710600_Nathrop_FSTopo.pdf

Download GPS-compatible maps at: www.browncanyon.org/map or www.garna.org/friends-of-fourmile

Camping

Ruby Mountain and Hecla Junction Recreation Areas have developed campgrounds with fire rings, picnic tables, and vault toilet restrooms. More information can be found at <http://AHRACamping>. Aspen Ridge Road has undeveloped camping opportunities. To maintain the natural setting please only use previously disturbed sites and practice Leave No Trace principles. Restrooms and trash services are not available. There are no permits required to camp overnight in the monument outside of the developed campgrounds. If camping along the river, Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area regulations apply including the use of a portable toilet device and fire pan. Outside of the river corridor, practice Leave No Trace principles and bury human waste at least six inches deep, do not create fire rings, and camp on durable surfaces.

Grazing

The monument contains several active livestock grazing allotments that have been permitted since implementation of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934. Grazing use in this area supports the local economy and maintains the historic ranching heritage of Chaffee County. Livestock grazing management practices are conducted to promote a balance in use with wildlife needs, protection of riparian areas and healthy plant ecosystems.

Fees

Browns Canyon National Monument does not require entrance fees. This includes Ruby Mountain Trailhead where a fee is not required to park or travel through on FS Road 300. Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area recreation sites provide easy access to the monument. Ruby Mountain and Hecla Junction require a Colorado Parks and Wildlife parks pass. Annual park passes can be obtained at the AHRA Visitor Center in Salida or on the Colorado Parks and Wildlife's website. Daily passes can be purchased at self-serve kiosks at the sites.

For more information about fees, visit <http://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/ArkansasHeadwatersRecreationArea/Pages/Fees.aspx>



Photo by BLM

Driving Access

Motorized access to Browns Canyon National Monument is via unpaved roads that have blind corners and other hazards.

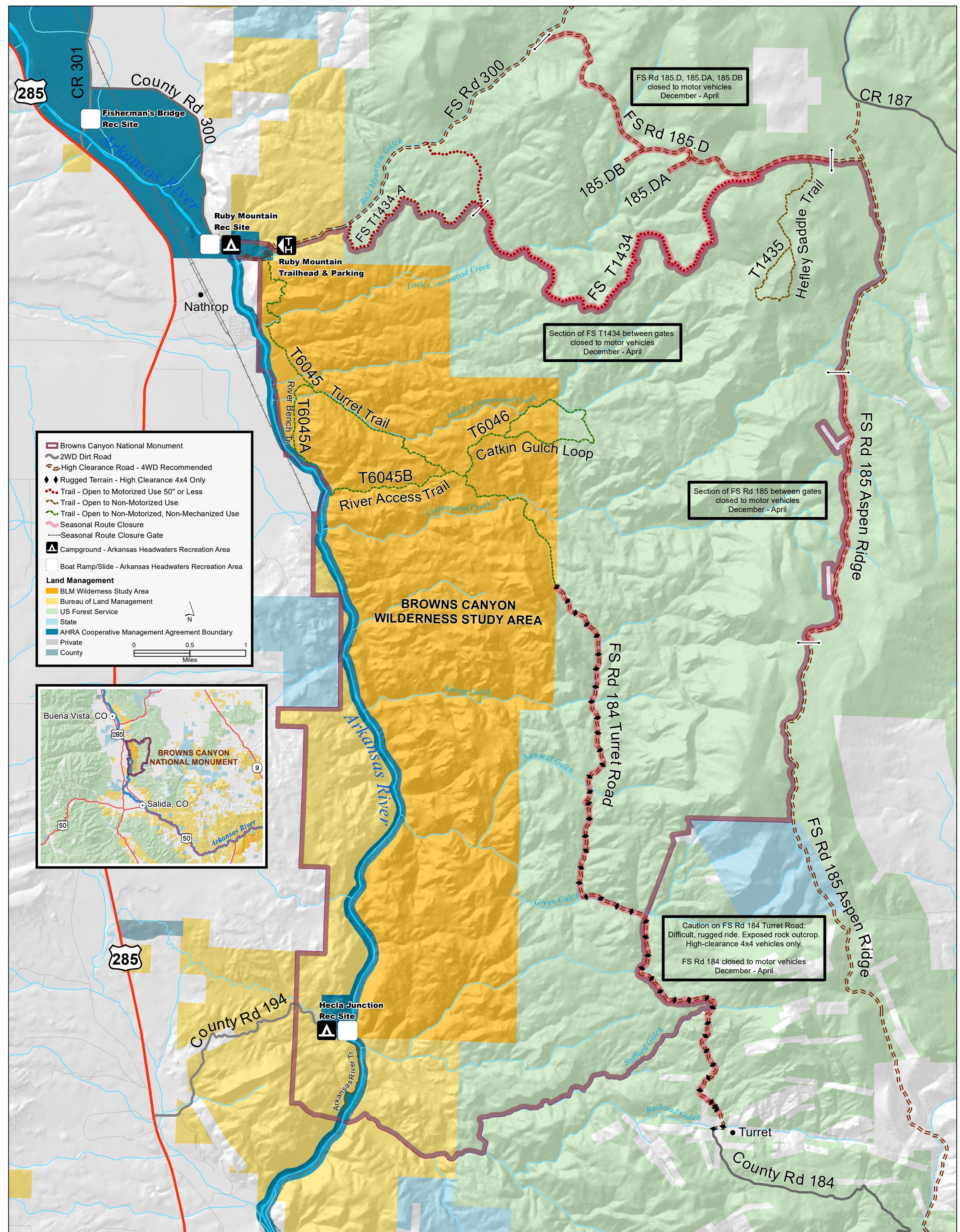
The road to Ruby Mountain (County Road 301/300) includes a one lane wide stretch, use caution. Continue through the Ruby Mountain Recreation site to access the Ruby Mountain Trailhead and Forest Service Road 300.

The Hecla Junction Recreation Site (AHRA) is the primary location for taking boats out after floating through Browns Canyon. The area features a campground with restrooms, changing facilities and picnic sites. The road into Hecla Junction (County Road 194) is steep and can be difficult to travel in heavy rain or snow. Be cautious of two-way traffic on blind corners and hills.

Forest Service Road 1434 is an ATV route that traverses the northern boundary of the monument.

Aspen Ridge Road (Forest Service Road FS 185) is a bumpy ride that is not appropriate for low clearance vehicles. The golden autumn leaves draw visitors to this popular 4x4 route. High clearance 4x4 vehicles recommended.

Turret Road (Forest Service Road FS 184) takes you into the heart of the monument on a rough 4x4 road that should only be attempted by experienced drivers with high clearance vehicles. While traveling through open meadows and granite spires, the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness offers a spectacular backdrop. Please be mindful of private property near the old mining town of Turret.



Stay on designated trails unless confident in cross-country hiking and navigation skills.