

## Camping

- The area has two group campsites and 15 single campsites. The sites cannot be reserved in advance and are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

- Fees for group and single campsites are posted at the fee area. Please pay campsite fees as soon as you occupy a site. Checkout time for all campsites is 1 p.m.

- Dispersed camping is allowed in some areas; please use existing sites.

- Dispersed camping is not allowed in the campground or day-use area; use designated campsites only. No camping in parking lots. No camping in the Rock Garden.

- No horses allowed in the campground.

- Dogs must be under owners' control everywhere in Penitente Canyon.

- No firewood cutting or gathering.

- No shooting or firearms in the campground or day-use area.

- Use designated fire rings in the campground and pre-existing fire rings in dispersed campsites.

## Respect Wildlife

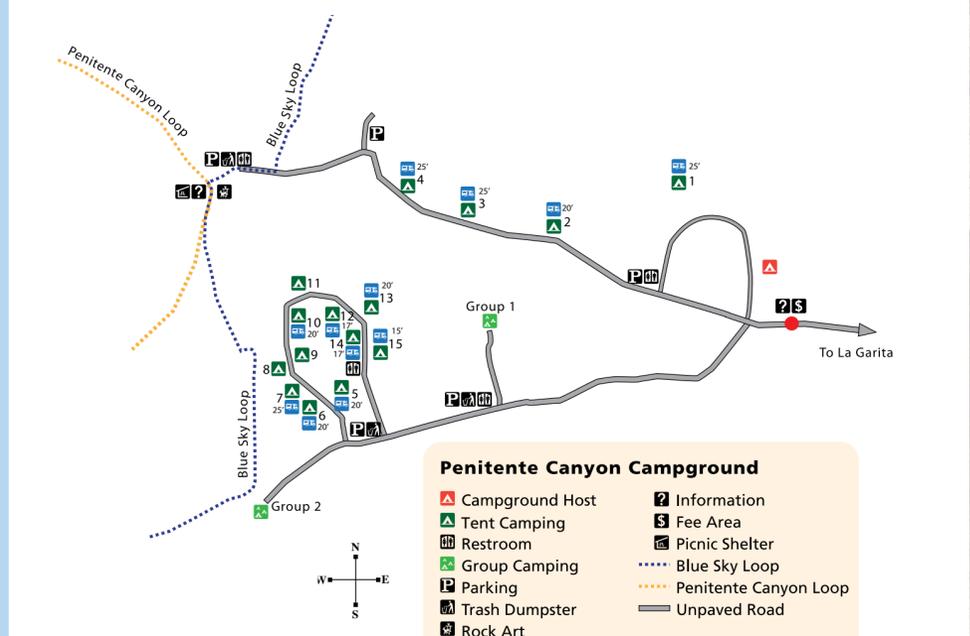
**Penitente Canyon is home to many animals. When you see wildlife, please:**

- Don't follow or approach animals.

- Never feed animals.

- Control your pets.

- Avoid sensitive times for wildlife such as early mornings, evenings and breeding seasons.



## Mountain Biking

**Follow the International Mountain Bicycling Association's Six Rules of the Trail:**

- Ride on open trails only

- Leave No Trace

- Control your bicycle

- Always yield the trail

- Never scare animals

- Plan ahead



Don't ride when trails are wet and muddy to prevent rutting. There is no fee for mountain biking or climbing in the area. All donations are used to maintain and enhance recreation within Penitente Canyon.

## Stay on Designated Trails!

Motorized vehicles are allowed on designated roads only. All other trails are non-motorized. A sign at the beginning of each trail lists who can use the trail—hikers, mountain bikers or horseback riders. Stay on designated roads and trails; do not cut switchbacks.

## Share the Trail

Let your fellow trail users know you are coming—a friendly greeting is one method. Anticipate other trail users as you ride around corners. Bicyclists should yield to all other trail users, unless the trail is clearly signed for bike-only travel. Bicyclists traveling downhill should yield to those headed uphill, unless the trail is signed differently.

Cattle grazing typically occurs after Oct. 1 – please leave gates as you find them to prevent cattle from getting into places they shouldn't.

## Trail Etiquette

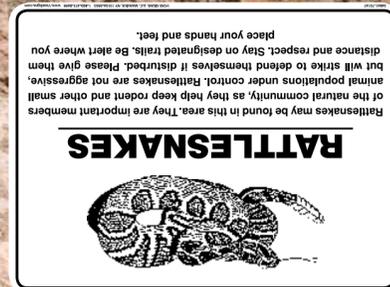
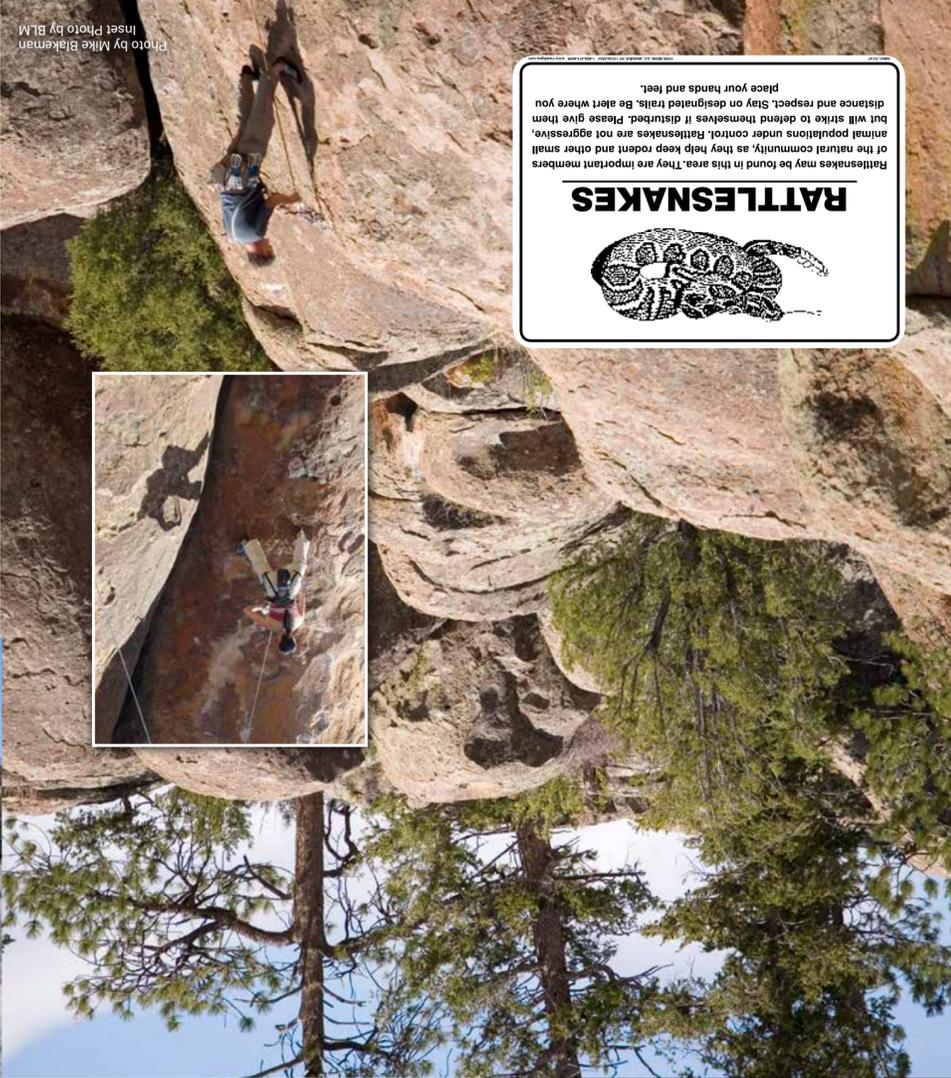
Cross-country travel on BLM lands is prohibited (except for hiking and horseback).

## Other Amenities

Drinking water is available at the well house near the entrance to the area, typically May through October.

A picnic shelter, an interpretive kiosk, toilets and a trash dumpster are located in the day-use area at the entrance to Penitente Canyon.

For more information, check out the entrance kiosk when you arrive.



Prairie rattlesnakes are common in Penitente Canyon. Please be on the lookout for them. Always watch where you are stepping or reaching—and don't reach where you can't see. If you encounter a snake, leave it alone and simply back away. Parents should always keep a close eye on their children in snake country.

**Stay Safe**  
Safety is your responsibility. Know your limits and come prepared for the area's changing weather. All recreational activity is at your own risk.

**Plan Ahead**  
Check route and equipment before climbing.  
Use appropriate equipment.

- Follow the Leave No Trace principles for climbing.

- Don't monopolize routes.

- Use established trails to reach climbing areas.

- Climb in small numbers. Disperse your activities.

- Minimize chalk use and brush off heavily chalked holds. If you must use chalk, use pigmented chalks that blend in with the natural colors of the rock.

- Do not chip, chisel, glue, tag (graffiti) or in any way deface rock surfaces.

- No new bolting is permitted anywhere in the recreation area. Know your limits and skill level. All climbing is at your own risk.

**Remember**  
When you Climb, Please

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

The canyonlands of Penitente Canyon offer a blend of peaceful surroundings and diverse recreation opportunities less than 10 miles from a major highway. The BLM manages the 4,552-acre Penitente Canyon primarily for rock climbers, heritage tourists, mountain bikers, hikers and equestrians.

## Geology

The rocks in Penitente Canyon are remnants of up to 18 volcanic eruptions that took place in the San Juan Volcanic Field between 20 and 30 million years ago. The largest of these eruptions spewed 1,000 cubic miles of ash 27.8 million years ago, creating a huge underground chamber. Rocks overlying the chamber collapsed to create the La Garita Caldera.

## History

Ancestors of the Utes, Jicarilla Apaches and Puebloans have all left evidence of time spent hunting and camping here, along with explorers and trappers. The valley's first European settlers were Hispanic farmers and sheepherders who migrated from northern New Mexico.

Native Americans left scattered pictographs (painted rock art) throughout these canyonlands (the largest concentration in the San Luis Valley). Please leave all rock art as you find it. Do not touch, walk on, climb on, or disturb it in any way.



## Plan Ahead and Be Prepared

For current conditions, check with the BLM's San Luis Valley Field Office. Make sure you bring all necessary equipment and remember that safety is your responsibility. All recreational activity is at your own risk.

## Directions

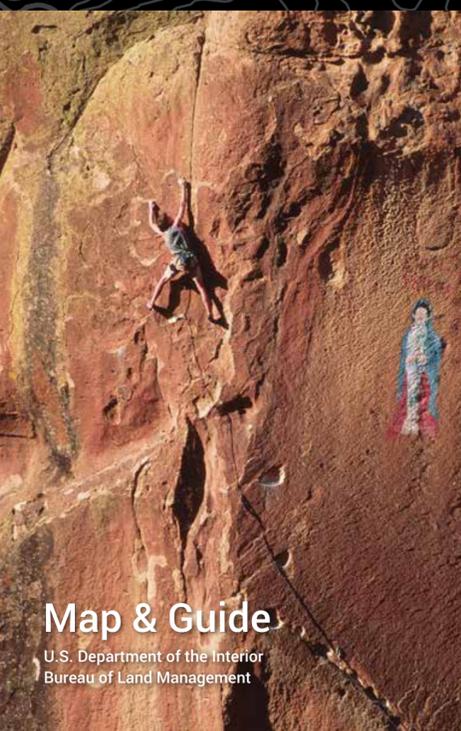
From U.S. 285, turn west onto Saguache County Road G. After 6 miles you will pass the La Garita Trading Post. Go another 0.5 miles to a Y intersection; take the left fork (County Road 38A). The entrance to the recreation area is another 0.5 miles, on your right.

## For More Information

**BLM San Luis Valley Field Office**  
1313 Highway 160 E.  
Monte Vista, CO 81144  
719-852-7074

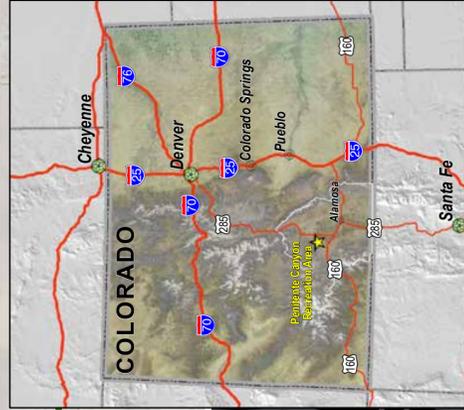
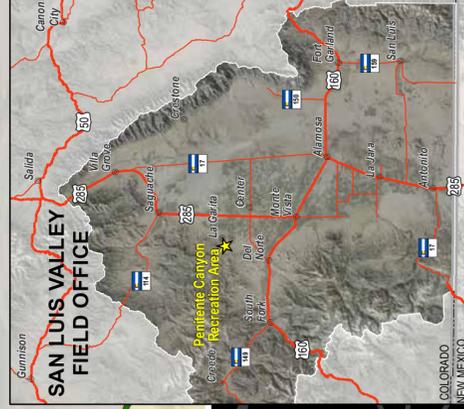
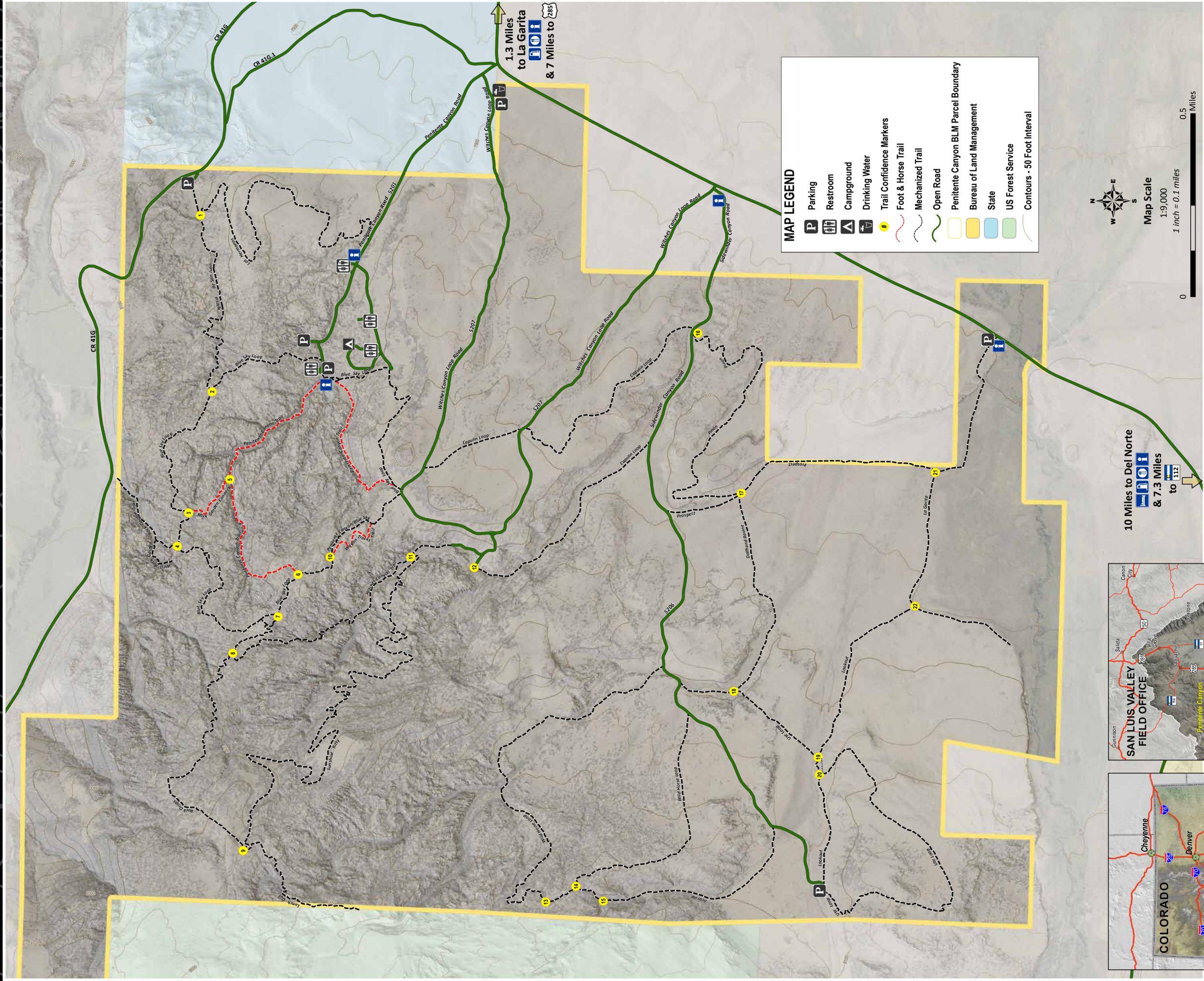
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Closed weekends and holidays

BLM/CO/GI-20/0011



## Map & Guide

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management



**Share the Trail**

Cross-country travel on BLM lands is prohibited (except for hiking and horseback).

**Stay on designated trails!**

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