

Dogs in Desolation Canyon

The Bureau of Land Management Price Field Office has decided to end its policy of allowing river runners to bring dogs on Desolation Canyon river trips. The decision will be effective for the 2012 river season.

This decision was not arrived at lightly. Desolation Canyon has been one of the few extended river trips where dog owners have had an opportunity to bring their pets with them during the low-use season, which extends from August 16 to November 15. For the most part the dogs have been well-behaved and the owners have been respectful of the canyon, its wildlife and other boaters.

In the last few years, however, there have been a number of incidents involving dogs, including an incident this summer where a dog bit a person at the Sand Wash boat ramp. Dogs have also been observed by boaters and river rangers chasing bighorn sheep and other wildlife. Rangers and other boaters have reported numerous occasions where dog droppings were found in camps and on trails. The BLM Price Field Office has also received numerous complaints from boaters regarding unleashed dogs, barking in camps and other incidents.

Desolation Canyon is one of the most spectacular and wild places in the West. The BLM is responsible for managing it to preserve its wilderness character, including its natural resources and the visitor's opportunity to find solitude in this wild setting. This policy change reflects the BLM's continuing effort to maintain the character and primitive nature of the river corridor while allowing visitors to more fully enjoy their river experience.