

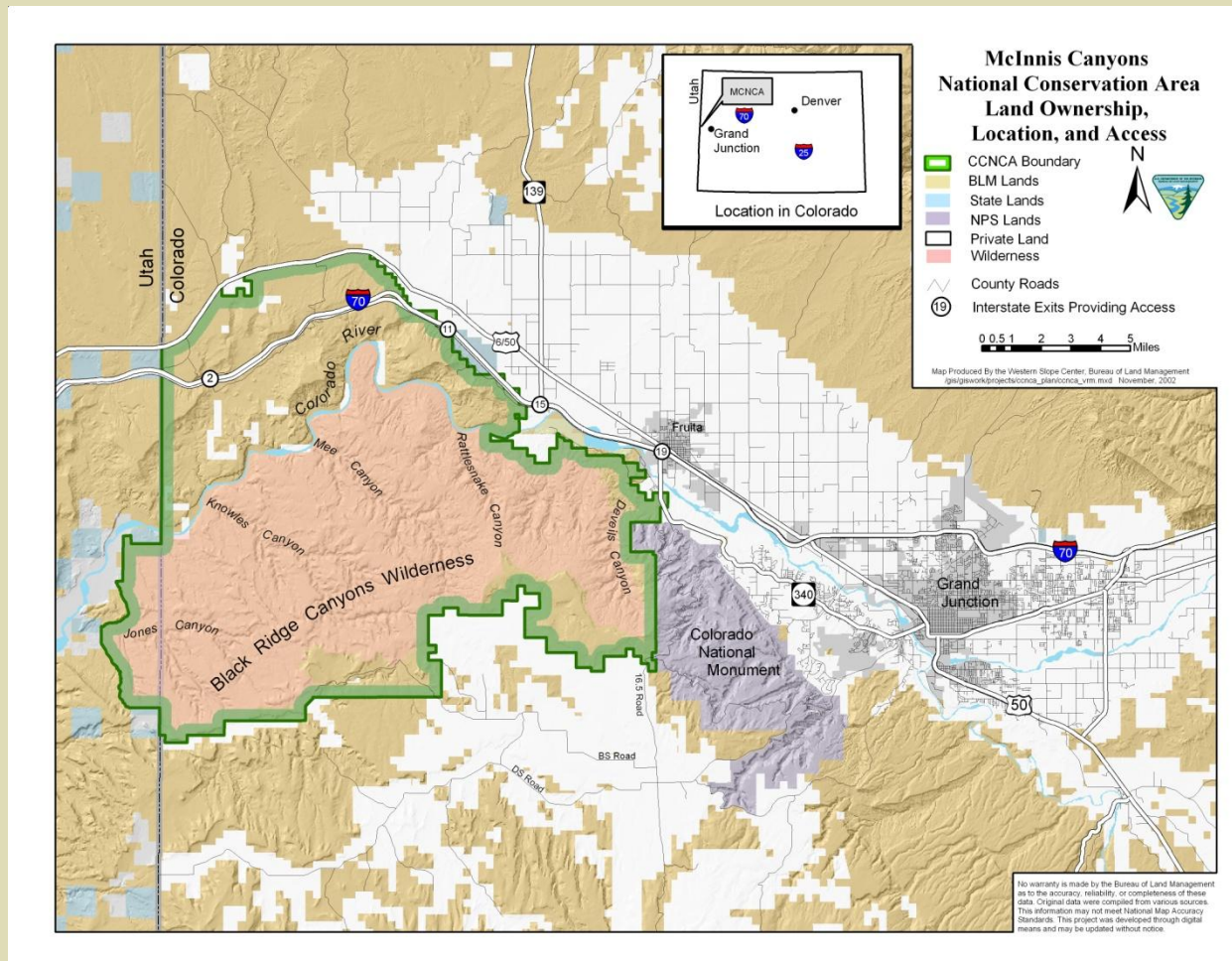
RUBY-HORSETHIEF FEE PROPOSAL



Grand Junction Field Office,
McInnis Canyons NCA

Ruby-Horsethief Special Area

- Designated as a Special Area in 1998



Ruby-Horsethief Management

- BLM manages the river corridor to provide “opportunities for visitors to engage in overnight flat-water boating for social group and family affiliation in a naturally-appearing red-walled river canyon.”
 - Primary activities: Overnight rafting, canoeing and kayaking, associated camping and wilderness hiking.
- River Corridor: 2,600 acres with 20 miles of the Colorado River through Horsethief and Ruby Canyons.
 - 28 campsites (will increase to 35 in 2012).
- Proposed permit system for overnight use of the river corridor.
 - Call-in permits through the BLM-Grand Junction Field Office for Friday or Saturday nights
 - Self register at the primary boat launch for Sunday through Thursday nights, which currently see lower levels of visitation.

Expenditures

Labor	weeks	hours/week	total
Supervisory Park Ranger	20	20	\$15,132
Park Ranger (Career Seasonal)	20	30	\$17,562
Park Ranger (Seasonal)	24	40	\$20,000
Natural Resource Specialist (invasive species treatment)	3	40	\$8,200
Law Enforcement Ranger	20	30	\$25,000
Operational Costs (Biological restoration, recreation operations)			\$85,894
			\$40,000
			\$125,894

Visitor numbers

- Increasing numbers over the last 10 years, highs in 2009, 2010 (20,000 camping nights)
- Long-term visitor use data will improve with permit information
- In 2010, 32 percent were from Mesa County, 61 percent were from within Colorado but outside Mesa County and 7 percent were from out of state.
 - 10 percent of users reported that this was their first time in Ruby-Horsethief, and 13 percent continued on through Westwater Canyon.
 - Frequency: 34 percent- once a year; 42 percent- a few times a year. 13 percent- at least four times a year.

Visitor Information

- Staff informational and educational Contacts:
 - Busy weekends: 400+ individual contacts per day
 - Loma Ranger when budgets permit (provide information and education, check equipment)
 - Law Enforcement :
Both a Ranger and
Rules for the first
time in 2011



Permit and fee proposal

- Formal public outreach since 2009
- Developed and refined through coordination with the McInnis Canyons subgroup of the NW RAC
- Proposed Fee Structure: Camping vs. launch-based
 - Refined with help of MCNCA subgroup: \$20 small group (1-5), \$50 medium (6-14), \$100 large (15-25)
 - Original: \$7/person per night: public comments indicated this was higher than preference
 - RAC subgroup noted it would be easier to monitor, less complicated to manage additions/subtractions to groups
 - Would apply to commercial customers as well
 - No fee at this time for day use

Structure and Benefits

- Individual Special Area Special Recreation Permit: REA and BLM policy allow the BLM to collect fees associated with a Special Recreation Permit (for individual or group use of special areas) to manage visitor use and protect resources.
- This differs from the standard and enhanced amenity fees under REA.

Benefits/Objectives for fee receipts

- 1. Recreation and visitor services, safety, and security through increased patrols by BLM river rangers and law enforcement officers
- 2. Invasive species treatments and natives species restoration
- 3. Wastewater take out improvements: new parking, restroom, and boat ramp in collaboration with Utah BLM.
- 4. Cleaning and maintenance of toilets
- 5. Cleaning and maintenance of campsites
- 6. Replacement and maintenance of existing signs and visitor information
- 7. Development of new educational and interpretive materials when requested by boaters

Public Involvement

- Formal Opportunities: 2009, 2010, 2011
 - 310 individual, substantive comments over 3 years
 - Specific to Fee, 4 comments against, 39 comments for, 21 “other”
 - Countless on-the-ground contacts
 - Six briefings for County Commissioners
 - Three presentations to Guides and Outfitters meetings
 - Multiple Sessions with Advisory Council



Public Feedback

- Use fees for a take-out at Westwater to serve Ruby boaters
- Increased presence at the Loma launch
- Enhanced enforcement of firepan and groover requirements, campsite “piracy”
- Enhance boater education
- Continue cottonwood restoration



