

# Browns Canyon

March 2015

## *CURRENT STATUS*

On February 19, President Obama designated Browns Canyon National Monument. The new monument, located in Chaffee County near the town of Salida, Colorado, spans approximately 21,500 acres of rugged cliffs, colorful rock outcroppings and stunning mountain vistas. Browns Canyon tells the story of the area's native peoples as well as the history of recent settlers and mining communities. The monument protects one of the nation's most popular destinations for whitewater rafting, with the Arkansas River and adjacent uplands supporting world-class recreation opportunities and a strong outdoor economy. The monument will be jointly managed by the BLM and U.S. Forest Service, and will continue the strong partnership of the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area.

## *BACKGROUND*

The Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area hosts more than 300,000 visitors floating it annually. Nearly one third of these visitors float the nationally-renowned Browns Canyon segment. The mid-elevation foothills of Browns Canyon offer rugged beauty, colorful outcroppings, views of high mountain peaks, lush riparian zones and the abundant wildlife of the Arkansas River Valley. Local elected officials, sportsmen's groups, conservation groups and business owners have endorsed permanently protecting this dramatic landscape. In addition to whitewater rafting, visitors enjoy fishing, hunting, hiking, backpacking, camping, horseback riding, snowshoeing and photography in the area. In 2014, Colorado Parks and Wildlife designated the Arkansas River, including the Browns Canyon segment, as a Gold Medal Trout Fishery.

The proclamation will allow for continued historic uses of the area, including hunting, fishing and livestock grazing, which will continue to be managed under existing rules and regulations. The designation does not alter or affect the valid water rights of any party and does not affect agreements governing management of the Arkansas River flows.

The BLM and United States Forest Service will jointly prepare a management plan for the monument in formal cooperation with the State of Colorado, along with other local governments and tribes. The plan will be developed in an open process with maximum public involvement from interested stakeholders, area ranchers and other permit holders.

