

Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment EIS

FACT SHEET: Recreation

RECREATION IN THE PLANNING AREA

The planning area offers a range of opportunities for recreation and exploration, including scenic driving, backpacking, off-highway vehicle driving, mountain biking, horseback riding, hunting, photography, hiking, orienteering, camping, scientific pursuit (e.g., archeology, geology, paleontology, astronomy, botany, and wildlife study), visiting historic and cultural sites, technical rock climbing, and canyoneering (both nontechnical and technical).

The recreation use activity areas, as well as use levels, generally correspond to three distinct regions, known as the Canyons of the Escalante, the Grand Staircase, and the Kaiparowits Plateau. During 2013, GSENM reported 759,587 visitors, while Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GCNRA) reported 2,061,328 visitors during 2012.

With the exception of Highways 12 and 89, paved portions of the Burr Trail, and a short section of Johnson Canyon, vehicle access in GSENM is via dirt roads. Many locations within the planning area are only reached by lengthy journeys on rough four-wheel-drive roads. There are five developed campgrounds within the decision area. Three are in GSENM: Calf Creek, Deer Creek, and White House, and two are Utah State Park campgrounds.

The majority of recreation use in the planning area takes place in the well-publicized region known as the Canyons of the Escalante. The Canyons of the Escalante extends east from Fiftymile Bench (from the base of the Straight Cliffs) to the Circle Cliffs and Waterpocket Fold. The main feature of the area is the canyon system carved into the expanses of Navajo and Wingate sandstone by the Escalante River and its tributaries. The Escalante River was the last major

river system to be mapped in the continental US. The Escalante River system begins high in the mountains, cascading off the southern flank of the Aquarius Plateau; it then winds its way through a maze of interconnected canyons before emptying into Lake Powell. Although remote in character, the Escalante River system and surrounding slick rock country are valued by recreationists from near and far for the undeveloped hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding opportunities provided.

Highway 12, which goes through Escalante Canyon, is an All American Road—the highest designation within the National Scenic Byway system. The scenic driving opportunities on Highway 12 and the Burr Trail are world class. Unpaved routes in the region, including the historic Hole-in-the-Rock Road and the Wolverine Loop Road, are highly scenic as well, and along with associated spur roads, provide access to most of the region's trailheads. The majority of the Escalante River trailheads are located within the boundaries of GSENM while the majority of the river destination points are located in GCNRA.

The Grand Staircase region receives the second highest level of recreational use in GSENM. Bounded in the east by the Cockscomb and in the west by Highway 89, the Grand Staircase is comprised of a succession of Chocolate, Vermilion, White, Gray, and Pink cliffs and terraces that rise 3,500 feet (south to north) in elevation. Into this staircase of cliffs and terraces, the Paria River and its tributaries have



The BLM is an agency in the US Department of the Interior that manages approximately a quarter billion acres – more than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. Approximately 27 million acres of BLM administered lands make up the collection of National Conservation Lands, also known as the National Landscape Conservation System. These include BLM National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, Wilderness Study Areas, and National Scenic and Historic Trails. The mission of the National Conservation Lands is to conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant landscapes that are recognized for their outstanding cultural,

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RECREATION *(continued)*

carved a landscape of isolated mesas, valleys, and buttes. Two popular scenic transportation routes (Skutumpah and Cottonwood Roads) and portions of Highways 89 and 12 provide access to the interior of the Grand Staircase. These scenic drives feature several short roadside hikes and points of interest, and attract the majority of visitors. For the more adventurous, a number of off-highway vehicle routes provide challenge and access to the more remote areas of the region along with opportunities for unconfined recreation, solitude, and overnight camping.



The majority of backcountry users within the Grand Staircase region concentrate their activities in the Paria and Hackberry Canyons where water can be found. Other backcountry use includes a series of little-known upland overland routes (historic stock trails). As with the Canyons of the Escalante, most of these historic stock trails travel from one canyon (water source) to another and are still used today by livestock.



The Kaiparowits Plateau is bounded on the east by the Straight Cliffs and on the west by the jagged double edge of the

East Kaibab Monocline, more commonly known as the Cockscomb. The Kaiparowits Plateau is the wildest, most arid, and most remote part of the planning area, with a few isolated springs, and only a handful of creeks. It receives the least amount of visitor use in the GSENM of the three regions; however, educational interest is increasing due to the ongoing research and discovery of fossils.

Portions of GCNRA lie within the southern portion of the Kaiparowits Plateau, including Lake Powell, which receives several thousand visits from boating enthusiasts and hikers each year. Overnight boat campers often take the opportunity to hike some of the numerous canyons and plateaus located along the shoreline. The Kaiparowits Plateau is largely undeveloped and offers some of the most remote and demanding roads for off-highway vehicles. The majority of visitor activity is from sightseers navigating the demanding 78-mile long Smoky Mountain Road between the towns of Escalante and Big Water. The primary backcountry use activities for the Kaiparowits Plateau are day hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, hunting (e.g.,

deer and bighorn sheep), and off-highway vehicle excursions. The Kaiparowits Plateau offers outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation.

Special Recreation Management Areas

The Monument Management Plan identified six special recreation management areas: Escalante Canyons, Paria/Hackberry, Paria Canyons and Plateau, the Highway 12 Corridor, the Highway 89 Corridor, and Fiftymile Mountain. Special recreation management areas are designated because an area is a focal point for visitation (Highway 12 and 89 corridors) or because recreational uses within an area may need to be closely managed to protect Monument resources or values or to prevent conflicts with other resource uses.



For more information, please visit the GSENM Livestock Grazing Plan Amendment Webpage: <http://blm.gov/pgld>

**Please submit your comments by
January 13, 2013.**

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