



WILDERNESS AND BACKCOUNTRY MANAGEMENT PLANNING POTENTIAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The National Park Service has identified potential management strategies and actions to achieve the goals of backcountry and wilderness management at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area and address issues identified during the planning process.

Wilderness and Backcountry Planning Goals

The overarching goal of the planning process is to provide an integrated framework for decision making for the stewardship of wilderness and backcountry lands within Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and the backcountry of Curecanti National Recreation Area.

To successfully manage and protect the wilderness and backcountry, planning would:

- Restore, preserve, and enhance wilderness character in wilderness areas.
- Provide a range of visitor opportunities while protecting fundamental resources and values and park purposes in wilderness and backcountry areas.
- Enhance public understanding of the relevance of wilderness character and opportunities, and stewardship of the wilderness and backcountry areas.

Broad Management Strategies and Activities Being Considered for All Wilderness and Backcountry Areas at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area

- Update management zoning and associated desired conditions for backcountry and designated wilderness.
- Identify visitor capacity for use areas—including climbing routes and wilderness—in accordance with the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978.
- Document extent necessary determination for commercial use in designated wilderness and complete commercial services necessary and appropriate analysis for backcountry in accordance with NPS management policies.
- Provide a spectrum of appropriate opportunities and experiences while protecting NPS resources and values. Some areas would provide for wild, natural, rugged experiences where self-reliance was integral. Other areas would provide recreational opportunities supported by trails, campsites, and other appropriate facilities.
- Enhance public understanding of wilderness character and backcountry values through wayside exhibits, signs, bulletin boards, publications, lesson plans as part of a suite of curriculum-based education programming available for teachers, inclusion as part of the existing Advanced Junior Ranger Program, and/or annual special event.
- Evaluate visitor-created trails (social trails) and restore as appropriate to reduce safety concerns and resource impacts.
- Continue collaborating with other land stewards and related federal agencies to monitor and improve habitat for threatened species, improve visitor experiences, and preserve and restore wilderness character.



Strategies and Activities Being Considered for Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (Wilderness and Backcountry)

- Regulate newly proposed climbing routes through permit process that considers concentration of existing routes and uses.
- Designate campsites in the proposed inner canyon primitive wilderness subzone to minimize resource impacts from overnight use and restore unsustainable, undesignated campsites to natural conditions.
- Require food storage in bear-proof containers, and align climbing, camping, and waste management practices with Leave No Trace principles within the inner canyon to protect qualities of wilderness character; livestock and dogs would not be allowed in inner canyon wilderness.
- Consider options for retrofitting, replacing, or removing pit toilets at the bottom of Gunnison and Warner Inner Canyon Routes; phase in required pack-in and pack-it-out waste management on all routes into the inner canyon wilderness.
- Remove unnecessary facilities and structures including fencing, stock ponds, irrigation systems, two-track roads, and livestock trailing routes.
- Implement an updated climbing management plan developed as part of wilderness and backcountry management planning process.

Strategies and Activities Being Considered for Curecanti National Recreation Area (Backcountry)

- Close horse access to backcountry areas that do not allow motor vehicle access.
- Evaluate any land acquired by the National Park Service for potential expansion of backcountry horse use.
- Implement a climbing management plan developed as part of wilderness and backcountry management planning process.

Public Comment

Please visit the NPS project website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/BLCA-CUREWBMP> to view the project newsletter and supporting documents related to the current planning effort. You may submit comments related to backcountry and wilderness planning and the strategies proposed in this document via the project website or by mailing comments to

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park – Curecanti National Recreation Area
Attention: Superintendent Deanna Greco
102 Elk Creek
Gunnison, CO 81230

The park will accept feedback on potential management strategies from December 22, 2021 to January 21, 2022. The NPS planning team will analyze feedback received during this outreach period and then work to finalize a wilderness and backcountry management plan for Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area.