



United States Department of the Interior  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park  
Curecanti National Recreation Area  
102 Elk Creek  
Gunnison, CO 81230



## **PUBLIC SCOPING for a Fire Management Plan for Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area**

**Background**—The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a fire management plan (FMP) and its associated environmental assessment (EA), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (BLCA) and Curecanti National Recreation Area (CURE). The parks' FMP was last updated in 2006 ([DataStore - Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Curecanti National Recreation Area Fire Management Plan and NEPA Documents \(nps.gov\)](#)). Click on the link to view the 2006 FMP, the associated Environmental Assessment, and a map of the current Fire Management Units.

As part of its mission, the NPS Wildland Fire Program manages wildland fire and fuel treatments to protect the public, park communities, and infrastructure; conserve natural and cultural resources; and maintain and restore natural ecosystem processes. The 2008 NPS Directors Orders #18 require each park unit with burnable vegetation to have an approved fire management plan (FMP). The 2022 Wildland Fire Management A-123 Program Review determined the BLCA and CURE 2006 FMP did not meet the requirements outlined in the 2014 Department of Interior FMP Framework and must be updated and approved. An updated FMP is needed to ensure BLCA and CURE's fire management planning is consistent with NPS policy, current conditions, and will continue to provide for fire personnel and public safety, protect park values and resources, and remain consistent with the parks' resource management objectives.

**Proposal**— The proposed plan would provide a framework and parkwide guidelines for the management of all wildfires, regardless of cause, size, or complexity. The plan would provide guidance on the use of prescribed fire and non-fire fuels treatments (e.g., manual, mechanical, herbicide) to reduce fuel loads and accomplish resource protection objectives. The plan would provide for fire personnel and public safety, consider the ecological benefits of wildfire, and promote communication and engagement with interested parties on fire-related activities.

### **Proposed FMP Goals and Objectives**

- Minimize risk to employees, responders, and the public during every fire management activity.
- Minimize adverse fire effects and impacts to highly valued resources and assets within and surrounding the park units.
- Foster and maintain a wildland fire management program that aligns with the parks' core purposes and promotes values of shared stewardship and collaboration.
- Promote ecological and social conditions that create, maintain, or restore fire-resilient landscapes.
- Protect natural and cultural resources, including species federally listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- Maintain communication and engagement with the public, bordering agencies, and tribes on fire-related issues and activities.

### **Issues and Concerns** to be addressed in the FMP and EA

- Protection of human health and safety, property, and infrastructure.
- Climate change.
- Natural ecosystem processes.
- Vegetation management, including control of non-native invasive plants.
- Impacts to wilderness character.
- Impacts on water quality and aquatic species.
- Impacts to ESA-listed Gunnison sage-grouse and wolves.
- Aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention.
- Unintended effects to bordering entities and jurisdictions.
- Use of mechanical fuels reductions and use of herbicides to reduce fuel loads.

**Public Comments During Scoping** Public participation is an important element of the planning process, and we welcome your comments, concerns, issues, suggestions, and potential topics for consideration. You are invited to submit comments on the information in this newsletter, the preliminary alternatives, and topics the Fire Management Plan/EA should address and analyze. Comments that provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail are most useful. The most valuable comments are those that present information that can be used when developing management alternatives, or present information that can be used when the NPS considers impacts of alternatives.

Please post comments online to the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/BLCACUREFMP2024> or mail comments to:

Superintendent, Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP and Curecanti NRA  
Attn: Fire Management Plan EA  
102 Elk Creek  
Gunnison, Colorado 81230

Comments will not be accepted except as specified above. Bulk comments in any format (hard copy or electronic) submitted on behalf of others will not be accepted. Please note that your entire comment, including your personal information, may be made publicly available at any time. You can request that we withhold your personal identifying information from public view, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Please provide scoping comments by: October 2, 2024. There will be another opportunity to comment when the Draft EA is completed (see timeline below).

We are here.



December 2023 – Summer 2024	Summer 2024	Fall – Winter 2024	Winter – Spring 2024/2025	Spring 2025
Data gathering, planning, and preparation	Initiate NEPA and public scoping period	Formulate draft and final plan alternatives, and prepare EA	Release Draft EA for public comment	NEPA decision document and plan implementation