

**Plants**

The plant community in this area has repeatedly evolved since the Eocene Epoch (56-33.9 million years ago). Geologic changes since the Precambrian (4,600-541 million years ago) make the area an important site for research on paleoclimatology and the effects of wildland fire and other disturbances.

Unique plant species within Browns Canyon include the endemic Brandegee's buckwheat as well as imperiled species such as Fendler's Townsend-daisy, Fendler's false cloak-fern, Livermore fiddleleaf and the endemic Front Range alumroot.

**Wildlife**

Browns Canyon is home to some of Colorado's most emblematic animal species, including mountain lions, bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, bobcat, red and gray fox, black bear and coyote, among others. The area's cliffs provide excellent habitat for peregrine falcons, prairie falcons and golden eagles.

The rugged river corridor of Browns Canyon National Monument represents one of the only riparian ecosystems along the Arkansas River that remains relatively undisturbed. Riparian corridors provide very important migration routes for birds and insects. A number of reptile and amphibian species are found in the area, including Woodhouse's toads, chorus frogs, bullsnakes, plains garter snakes, western rattlesnakes and Short-horned lizards.



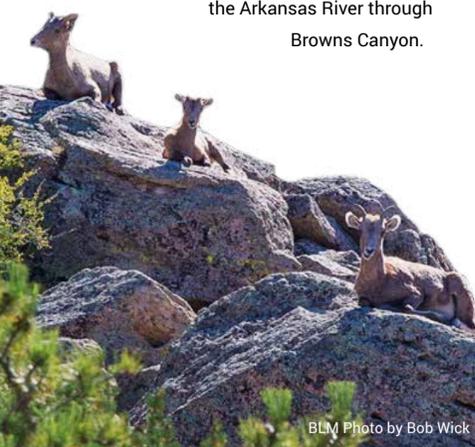
BLM Photo by Bob Wick

**Browns Canyon National Monument**

For centuries, the rugged granite cliffs, colorful rock outcroppings and stunning mountain vistas of Browns Canyon National Monument have attracted visitors from around the world. The area's unusual geology and roughly 3,000-foot range in elevation support a diversity of life and a wealth of geological, ecological, riparian, cultural and historic resources.

The 21,589-acre Browns Canyon National Monument was designated on February 19, 2015. The Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service jointly manage the monument. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), through the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA), manages river-based recreation on

the Arkansas River through Browns Canyon.



BLM Photo by Bob Wick

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**For more information**

**Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area**  
307 W. Sackett Avenue  
Salida, CO 81201  
719-539-7289  
<https://www.blm.gov/visit/arkansas-headwaters-recreation-area>

**BLM Royal Gorge Field Office**  
3028 East Main Street  
Cañon City, CO 81212  
719-269-8500

**USFS Salida Ranger District**  
5575 Cleora Road  
Salida, CO 81201  
719-539-3591  
<https://www.fs.fed.us/visit/browns-canyon-national-monument>

Browns Canyon does not have an onsite visitor center. Information and collectable "passport" stamp are available at the above locations.

BLM/CO/GI-20/011

Cover: Photo by CPW

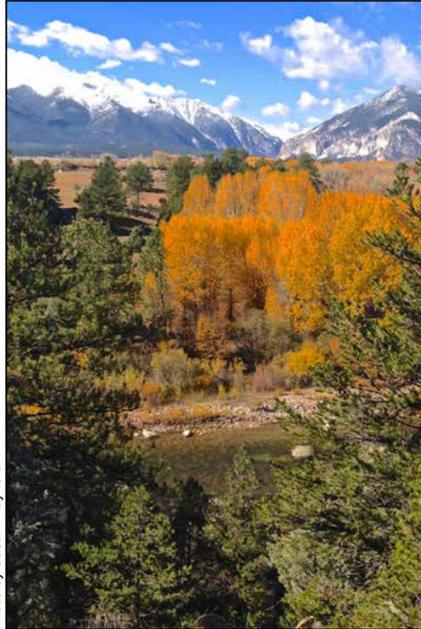


Following the Leave No Trace principles and combining them with your personal judgment, awareness and experience will help protect natural and cultural resources and preserve the experience for future visitors. Please learn and practice Leave No Trace skills and ethics and pass them on to those you meet. It's easy to enjoy and protect the monument simultaneously.

- Plan ahead and prepare. 
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces. 
- Dispose of waste properly. 
- Leave what you find. 
- Minimize campfire impacts. 
- Respect wildlife. 
- Be considerate of other visitors. 

For more information, visit <https://lnt.org/>

Photo by Susan Mayfield



**Fishing**

The Arkansas River within the AHRA is a world-class fishery and provides an excellent opportunity for anglers to test their skills at catching brown and rainbow trout. As a testament to the excellent fishery, CPW designated the Arkansas River from the confluence with the Lake Fork of the Arkansas River downstream to Parkdale, Colorado (102 miles), as a Gold Medal Trout Fishery in 2014. This addition to the Gold Medal registry is

the state's longest—nearly a third of Colorado's 322 Gold Medal river miles in a single segment. The Gold Medal designation itself doesn't carry any special fishing regulations; however, a valid Colorado Fishing License is required and other special fishing regulations apply within certain portions of the Gold Medal stretch of river. For more information, please refer to CPW fishing regulations (<http://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/RulesRegs/Brochure/fishing.pdf>).

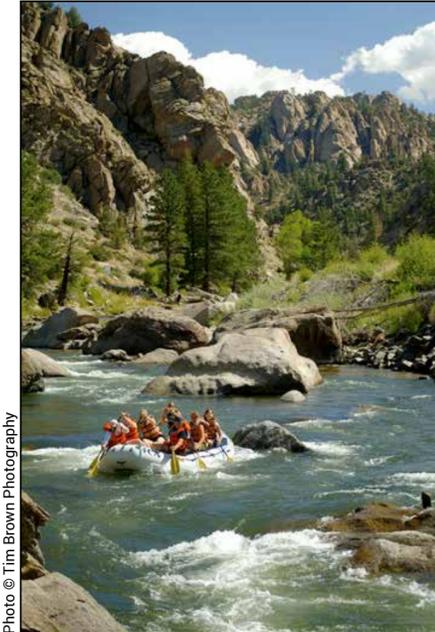


Photo © Tim Brown Photography

**Cultural and Historical Resources**

The story of people living in the upper Arkansas River valley is told through sites and artifacts dating back 11,000 years. Within the monument, evidence of seasonal camps remains, including open campsites, prehistoric stone structures and rock shelter sites, among other features. These sites range from the Paleolndian (11,000 years before present) to the Late Prehistoric Period (from around 2,000 years ago to the 1700s). The cultural resources within Browns Canyon provide future generations with the opportunity to learn from those who preceded us in exploring this beautiful area.

Discovery of gold near the Arkansas River in 1859 brought an influx of people to the area, along with the need for transportation. While the old Stagecoach Road provided a route to Leadville for many years, it was very rugged and the trip was a long one. The arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad in 1880 allowed for much easier access to the booming mining area around Leadville. Many interesting historic prospecting sites can still be found throughout the monument.

Browns Canyon has a rich cultural history that we are still investigating. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 prohibits removing, disturbing or defacing archaeological sites or artifacts on federal public lands.

**NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS**

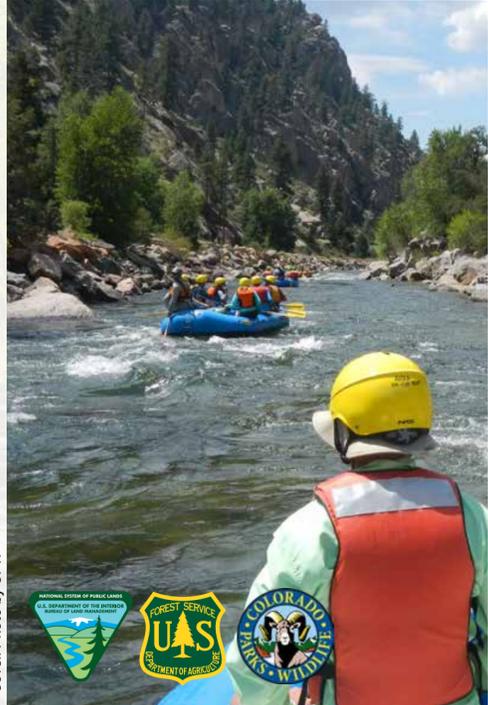
**Browns Canyon National Monument**

BLM Photo by Kyle Sullivan



**About National Monuments**

National monuments are designated to afford protection, conservation and restoration to landscapes of tremendous beauty, diversity, and historic or scientific interest. The Antiquities Act of 1906 granted the President authority to designate national monuments to protect "objects of historic or scientific interest." While most national monuments are established by the President, Congress has also occasionally established national monuments to protect natural or historic features. Since 1906, the President and Congress have created more than 100 national monuments managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

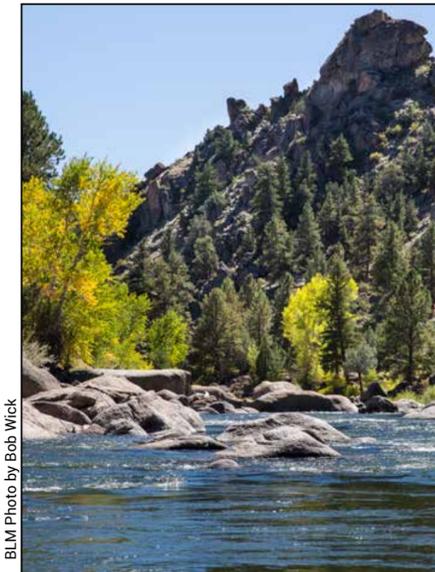


**Whitewater Activities**

Whitewater boating is the most popular recreational activity that occurs in Browns Canyon. Through the AHRA partnership, CPW manages commercial and private boating through Browns Canyon along with all recreational use on the Arkansas River from the confluence of the Lake Fork and the East Fork of the Arkansas River to Lake Pueblo.

The Arkansas River is the most accessible way to enjoy the national monument. Depending on water levels, it can provide a mild or wild whitewater boating experience in the scenic canyon.

For more information on water flows and float permits, visit <http://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/ArkansasHeadwatersRecreationArea/Pages/Waterflow.aspx>



BLM Photo by Bob Wick

## Hiking Trails

### Ruby Mountain Trailhead:

#### Roundtrip to river via Little Cottonwood (#6045): 2.7 miles

A short but strenuous trek to the river. Please do not trespass on private property. Instead, follow the dry creek bed at Little Cottonwood Creek just before a flat river bench section of the main trail.

#### Roundtrip via the River Bench Trail (#6045A): 5.5 miles

After Little Cottonwood Creek, the main trail continues along a gentle, flat river bench. Take this route to continue along the river bench to an overlook of the Arkansas River.

#### Roundtrip via River Access Trail (#6045B): 9 miles

Continue on the main trail away from the river bench to experience varied terrain before taking this route to access the river. Return the same way.

#### Roundtrip including Catkin Gulch Loop (#6046): 11.5 miles

A full experience of the monument's wilderness character. Navigational tools and skills recommended.

#### Roundtrip to Forest Service Road 184 (#6045): 11 miles

Hike the main trail to the boundary of the Wilderness Study Area where it meets vehicle access at Turret Road.

### Hecla Junction Trailhead (Hecla Junction Recreation Site):

#### Roundtrip via Arkansas River Trail: 2 miles

A family-friendly hike along the west bank of the river. During high water seasons, watch rafters navigate the notorious Seidel's Suckhole.

### Bassam Park – Aspen Ridge Area Trailhead:

#### Roundtrip to overlook (#1435) 2.5 miles

This trail is located outside of the Wilderness Study Area and is open to mountain biking. At an elevation of 9,500 ft., it remains relatively flat as it meanders through meadows, pines and aspen to stunning views.

A Nathrop area topographic map is recommended for any off-trail hiking:

[https://data.fs.usda.gov/geodata/rastergateway/data/38106/fstopo/383710600\\_Nathrop\\_FSTopo.pdf](https://data.fs.usda.gov/geodata/rastergateway/data/38106/fstopo/383710600_Nathrop_FSTopo.pdf)

Download GPS-compatible maps at: [www.browncanyon.org/map](http://www.browncanyon.org/map) or [www.garna.org/friends-of-fourmile](http://www.garna.org/friends-of-fourmile)

## Grazing

The monument contains several active livestock grazing allotments that have been permitted since implementation of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934. Grazing use in this area supports the local economy and maintains the historic ranching heritage of Chaffee County. Livestock grazing management practices are conducted in a manner that promotes a balance in use with wildlife needs, protection of riparian areas and healthy plant ecosystems.

## Fees

Browns Canyon National Monument does not require fees for entrance. However, parking at the Ruby Mountain Recreation Site and/or the Hecla Junction Recreation Site requires either a CPW annual or daily parks pass. Annual park passes can be obtained at the AHRA Visitor Center in Salida or daily passes can be obtained at self-serve kiosks at the recreation sites. Summer campground reservations can be made by calling 800-244-5613.

For more information about fees, visit <http://cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/ArkansasHeadwatersRecreationArea/Pages/Fees.aspx>



Photo © John Fielder

## Access

Motorized access to Browns Canyon National Monument is via unpaved roads that have blind corners and other hazards.

The Ruby Mountain Recreation Site (AHRA), which features a campground with restrooms, changing facilities and picnic sites is a primary boat launch location. The road to Ruby Mountain includes a stretch that is one lane wide, use caution.

The Hecla Junction Recreation Site (AHRA) is the primary location for taking boats out after floating through Browns Canyon. The area features a campground with restrooms, changing facilities and picnic sites. The road into Hecla Junction is steep and can be difficult to travel in heavy rain or snow.

Forest Service Road 1434 is an ATV route that traverses the northern boundary of the monument.

Aspen Ridge Road (Forest Service Road 185) comprises the eastern boundary of the monument and is a popular drive in the fall for viewing the golden aspen leaves. High clearance 4x4 vehicles recommended.

Turret Road (Forest Service Road 184) off Aspen Ridge Road provides a rugged 4x4 experience into the heart of the monument. While traveling through open meadows and granite spires, the Collegiate Peaks Wilderness serves as the backdrop.

