

Field Trip Guidelines for trips within Grand Junction BLM Field Office, Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area and McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area

Why have guidelines?

The number one reason is to help protect the prehistoric and historic sites in the area. But these guidelines also address other issues such as: protecting plants and wildlife and avoiding trespass. These guidelines were created in March 2016. Any additions will be annotated with a date of the addition.

Protecting Sites

We are deeply saddened when we come to an archaeological site that has been marred by graffiti or vandalized by thieves digging for “treasures” or disassembled for firewood (e.g. corrals or cabins). How can we **help prevent** such damage from happening?

Unfortunately, the best way to keep our archaeological sites safe is to keep their locations hidden. A **social trail** leading directly to an archaeological site is just tempting fate. **Posting photographs** of little known sites increases the chances of others going hunting for those sites. You may think your photographs hold no information on the site’s location but when combined with the field trip write-up, comments after the trip and other photographs from the trip, there may be more location information than you realize. While people attempting to track down your photograph locations may be well meaning, their site-hunting can lead to social trails. A large and/or boisterous group visiting a site during a field trip can **attract attention** to the site. Think about whether other people visiting the area will see your field trip group: standing looking at a site; hiking towards a site; or parked near a site. Those people may become curious and revisit the area to see what was attracting your group.

Whether a site is “little known” is not easily defined and each of us needs to use **our own best judgement**. Things you might consider: 1) you’ve rarely seen anyone else at the site 2) you've not noticed much in the way of footprints near the site 3) there's a lot of cool stuff still lying around that hasn't been walked off with or piled into "collector's piles" (more on collector’s piles later) 4) you've never seen any website photos of the site or 5) there's little or no graffiti or other signs of disturbance at the site. Taking extra care to continue to keep the locations of little known sites hidden will help keep those sites in pristine or near-pristine condition. You are welcome to consult the BLM Liaison (casGJBLMliaison@gmail.com) if you have questions.

There are some sites where the GJ BLM archaeological team would like us to consider avoiding during field trips. These limited number of sites are special for reasons such as:

- 1) They are particularly vulnerable to vandalism due to their proximity to heavily traveled or easily accessible areas; or
- 2) They are particularly spiritually significant to modern Native Peoples; or
- 3) They are particularly fragile or unblemished.

If you have a site that you think might fit into one of these categories and would like to get advice on whether to host a field trip to the site, or about whether special precautions should or could be taken

during a field trip, then get in touch with the BLM Liaison (casGJBLMliaison@gmail.com) who may have the information you need or can put you in touch with the GJ BLM archaeologists.

General Guidelines

1. Avoid the creation of social trails (see section below).
2. Avoid turning a faint social trail into a pronounced social trail.
3. Limit posting of photographs of archaeological sites on the internet (Meetup, Facebook, etc.) to those sites that are well known to the general public.
4. Consider using binoculars to admire a site from a distance.
5. Be aware of other visitors in the area at the same time as the field trip and take steps to avoid their learning about lesser-known sites.
6. Be sure you have permission to visit or cross private property (you can check private property ownership in Mesa County on the Mesa County Assessor's website). Colorado law indicates **trespass occurs** where an easement or permission is not specifically granted even if the landowner has **not fenced or not posted** the boundary of their property. The BLM Liaison can help you with this as well.
7. If you volunteer (or have in the past) for GJ BLM Archaeologists, be sure you have their permission to share the location of sites you learned about during your volunteer work.
8. While it is a laudable activity to pick up trash while on a field trip, be careful to not remove historic items (items 50 years or older).
9. Consider keeping voices at a moderate to low volume. Not only will this draw less attention to your group but it may allow field trip members to enjoy some natural sounds such as a call of a canyon wren.
10. Don't contribute to collector's piles. We've all seen piles of lithics or other items left on top of a boulder or on a flat piece of ground. They attract attention to a site and tempt some people to pocket some of the pieces. They also hamper archaeological studies as they distort where the items were originally located. Please don't make the problem worse by adding more items to these piles.
11. Keep trip descriptions and comments after the trip as general as possible to avoid revealing location information. **Posting a map** of where you'll be heading showing planned stops **should be avoided**. Consider emailing maps to the attendees instead.

Avoiding the Creation of Social Trails

There's nothing like a social trail to make the next visitor think "I wonder where this goes?" and thus follow the social trail to see. This is especially true if the social trail appears to be leading to a rock wall.

Here are some ideas on leaving little to no trace of your visit:

- 1) Walk on hard surfaces, especially at the point where you leave the official road or trail. This might mean going a bit out of your way to find some flat rocks to step on.

2) Walk in a wash; not quite as good as stepping on rocks as your footprints will still be visible until the next rain, but at least a hard rain will wash your footprints away.

3) Don't walk in single file but approach from different angles and leave from different starting spots along the official trail/road. It doesn't take very many people walking along the same route across our fragile desert soils to leave behind a very obvious social trail.

4) When you first leave the official trail or road, angle your approach away from the destination, then turn after a distance towards the site.

5) Consider heading to a good view-point and using binoculars to look at the site instead of approaching the site itself.

Guidelines for Specific Outings

This list, created March 2016, will be supplemented overtime as more field trips are scheduled or as BLM resource management rules change. Any updates to the list below will be noted with a date here and below.

Big Dominguez Canyon

- There are some very well-known sites in Big Dominguez Canyon, as well as other less well-known; some of the less well-known sites have spiritual significance to modern Native Tribes.
- Please only post photos of the well-known sites
- Please stay within 30 feet of the designated trail (exceptions: visiting the waterfalls and the corral).
- This area is heavily visited by a wide variety of people, be especially vigilant about avoiding the creation of social trails and avoiding attracting attention to sites (even ones you might think are well-known).
- This is in a wilderness area, please set group size (12 or fewer is a general rule of thumb) and manage dogs appropriately. Other visitors to the area may be expecting solitude.
- New resource protection rules are under development and will be posted here when they are finalized.

Black Ridge Wilderness

- Wilderness in McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area.
- This includes the cabin in Devil's Canyon
- Group size limit is 12, otherwise BLM authorization should be acquired. Dogs should be on a leash in high-use areas and under voice command otherwise.
- Please keep in mind that other visitors may be seeking solitude when they visit the wilderness.
- Within the river corridor, group size limit is 25 if accessed from the river (i.e. you arrive by boat)

Calamity Camp

- Watch out for nails protruding from lumber on the ground.
- Consider not entering buildings as the ceilings may not be stable and Hantavirus may be present.
- Avoid leaning or sitting on standing walls, as they are generally in need of stabilization.

Carpenter Mining Community

- Part of the Carpenter Coal Mine site is on private property. Be sure you have permission from the private property owner before going beyond the public land.
- To the southwest of the site is a designated target shooting area, be careful about wandering too close to that location.

Dolores Canyon

- Parts of this canyon between Gateway and south to the Mesa County border are public land and parts are private property. Be sure to have permission or verify an easement exists before crossing private property.
- Parts of this canyon are within the Sewemup Mesa Wilderness Study area, please set group size and manage dogs appropriately.
- Some sites along here are not well known; please consider limiting what photographs are posted.
- With easy access from Highway 141 and heavy visitor volume, steps to keep site locations hidden are especially important.

Escalante Canyon

- Parts of this canyon are within Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area, parts are state owned land and parts are private property. Be sure to have permission before crossing or entering private property.

Glade Park

- There is a mixture of public and private property in the area of Glade Park, please be sure you have permission if you plan on entering or crossing private property.
- All sites are not well-known to the public; please consider not posting any photographs of sites.

High Flume Trail (Will Minor sheep trail)

- This is in the Black Ridge Wilderness area. The maximum group size is 12; otherwise authorization should be requested from the BLM. Dogs should be on leash in high-use areas and under voice command elsewhere.
- Please remember that other visitors may head into the wilderness seeking solitude.

Lime Kiln by Little Park Road

- Parts of the kiln wall are falling down. Please be careful to not loosen rocks in the kiln's walls further by standing near the edges of the walls or leaning on the walls.

McDonald Creek Canyon

- There are some very well-known sites in McDonald Creek Canyon, others less well-known
- Please only post photos of the well-known sites.
- Please avoid approaching the alcove site close to the river as the area is fragile (if you stop to read the information kiosk at the trailhead, you'll note this same request listed there.)
- This area gets quite a few visitors, be extra vigilant about avoiding the creation of social trails and avoiding attracting attention to sites (even ones you think might be well-known).
- The maximum group size is 12, otherwise authorization from the BLM should be requested. Dogs should be on leash in high-use areas and under voice command elsewhere.

McInnis Canyon NCA accessed from Kingsview Road outside Wilderness

- This is a heavily visited area, steps to keep site locations hidden are especially important.
- Group size limit is 25 outside the Wilderness. Dogs should be on a leash in high-use areas and under voice command otherwise.
- Includes trails such as the K, D, F and P trails until the Wilderness is reached, once in the Wilderness the group size limit is 12, unless BLM authorization is granted.

New Verde Mine

- Watch out for nails protruding from lumber on the ground.
- Consider not entering buildings as the ceilings may not be stable and Hantavirus may be present.
- Avoid leaning or sitting on standing walls, as they are generally in need of stabilization.

Robidoux Inscription rock art site

- Both the historic and prehistoric sites are on private property. Be sure you have permission from land-owner before going to this site.

Rough Canyon

- The well-known site in Rough Canyon is an example of how social-trails can lead to extensive damage and graffiti.
- This is a heavily visited area, steps to keep site locations hidden are especially important.
- Please only post photographs of the well-known site.

Sieber Canyon

- There is a mixture of public and private property in the Sieber Canyon area of Glade Park, please be sure you have permission prior to entering or crossing private property.

- All sites have only limited public knowledge; please avoid posting any photographs of sites.

Unaweep Canyon

- Parts of this canyon between Highway 141 and Gateway are public land and parts are private property. Be sure to have permission or verify an easement exists before crossing private property.
- Parts of this canyon are within the Palisade Wilderness Study area, please set group size and manage dogs appropriately.
- Some sites within this canyon are not well-known, please consider only posting photographs of well-known sites.
- With easy access from Highway 141 and heavy visitor volume, taking steps to keep site locations hidden is especially important.

Thank You

CAS-GJ BLM Liaison casGJBLMliaison@gmail.com