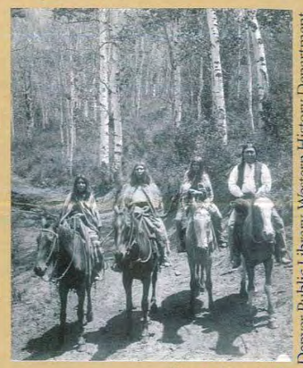
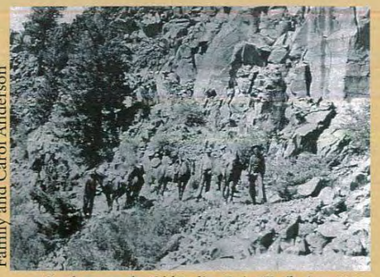
Travel the Ancient Trails

The Kannah Creek Trail has been in use for some 7,000 years by native people to access the Grand Mesa. It is the only route to the top that avoids the steep basalt cliffs on the mesa's southwest flanks. In spring, the Utes traveled onto the Grand Mesa to hunt and gather needed supplies such as tipi poles and edible and medicinal plants. In the fall they traveled down the Kannah Creek Trail to lower elevations to gather piñon nuts and settle in for the winter.



Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Department

Utes on horseback.



Courtesy of Walter Logan Farmer Family and Carol Anderson

Cowboys on the Old Indian Point Trail, circa 1905.

During the late 1800s, ranchers moved into Kannah Creek basin. After wintering their cattle in the lower valleys, they used the same Kannah Creek Trail to drive their cattle to the lush grasses on top of Grand Mesa. In need of additional trails, ranchers built the harrowing Indian Point Trail, still used to drive cattle today, as well as Coal Creek and Farmer trails. The Spring Camp Trail was used to transport hay from Spring Camp Flat.

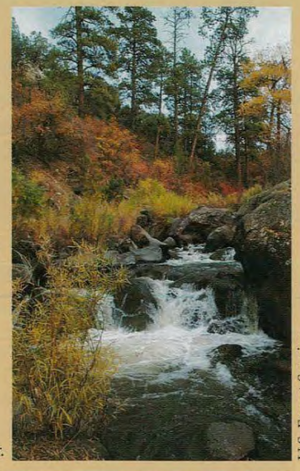
Cabins were built along trails to provide welcome shelter for cowhands who tended the herds. Often, entire families would spend the summer in these cow camp cabins on the Grand Mesa. The cabins are mostly gone except for a few such as the Raber Cabins, located on Forest Road 100.

Courtesy of Danny Vanover, City of Grand Junction

View of Kannah Creek Basin.

Kannah Creek Basin — Grand Junction's Treasure

Kannah Creek watershed is a source of high quality mountain water used by residents of Grand Junction. After drinking muddy Colorado River water and enduring pumping problems in the 1890s, Grand Junction looked to Kannah Creek for relief. Paying for water and piping it 20 miles across the desert to the treatment plant was a financial hardship for the city, but the clean mountain water was worth the effort. The City of Grand Junction has had an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service since 1915 to ensure high quality water in Kannah Creek watershed. The basin is also used for recreation, cattle grazing, and timber harvesting.



U.S. Forest Service

Kannah Creek in October.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alterative means for communications of program information (braille, large print, audio tapes, etc.) should contact the USDA Target Center at 202-720-2600 (voice or TDD.) To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Building, 14th & Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Leave No Trace

Keep Kannah Creek Basin pristine by practicing Leave-No-Trace techniques.

- Use established camp sites at least 200 feet from water.

- Bury human waste in a cat hole at least 6" deep and 200 feet from water.

- Pack out all garbage including baling twine and unused livestock feed.
- If you bring recreational livestock, you must use certified weed-free hay and grain.

To restrain recreational livestock :

- Do not tie livestock to trees.
- Use a highline with tree-saver straps on dry, hardened ground.
- Use pickets, but move pickets frequently.
- Use hobbles.
- Use electric fences to create a large corral area.

For additional information on Leave-No-Trace techniques, please contact: **www.lnt.org**

For More Information

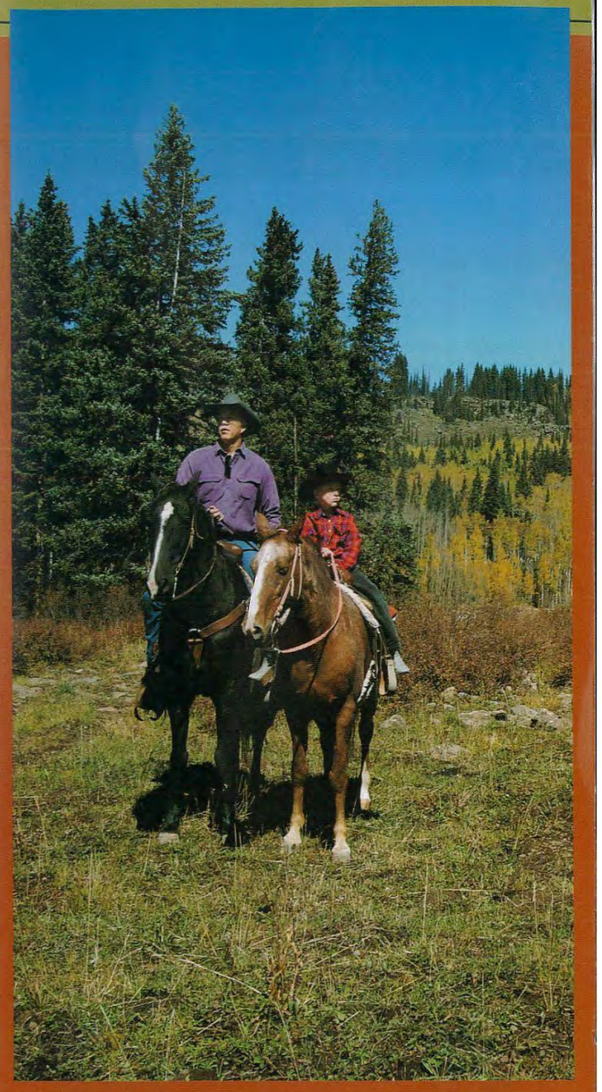
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests

Grand Valley Ranger District
2777 Crossroad Blvd. Unit A
Grand Junction, CO 81506
(970) 242-8211

Supervisors Office
2250 Highway 50
Delta, CO 81416
(970) 874-6600

Kannah Creek

Backcountry Trails



Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests

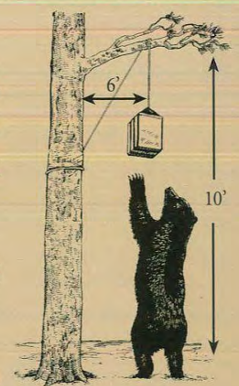
City of Grand Junction Colorado

Courtesy of Mark Byrant, The American Bear Organization (www.americanbear.org)

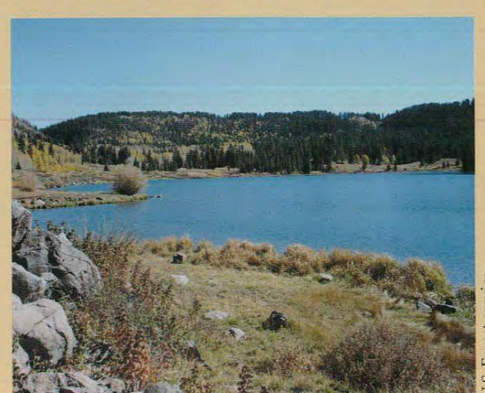
Black Bear

Camping with Black Bears

Kannah Creek is black bear country. Traveling and camping in black bear country involves planning ahead and taking precautions.

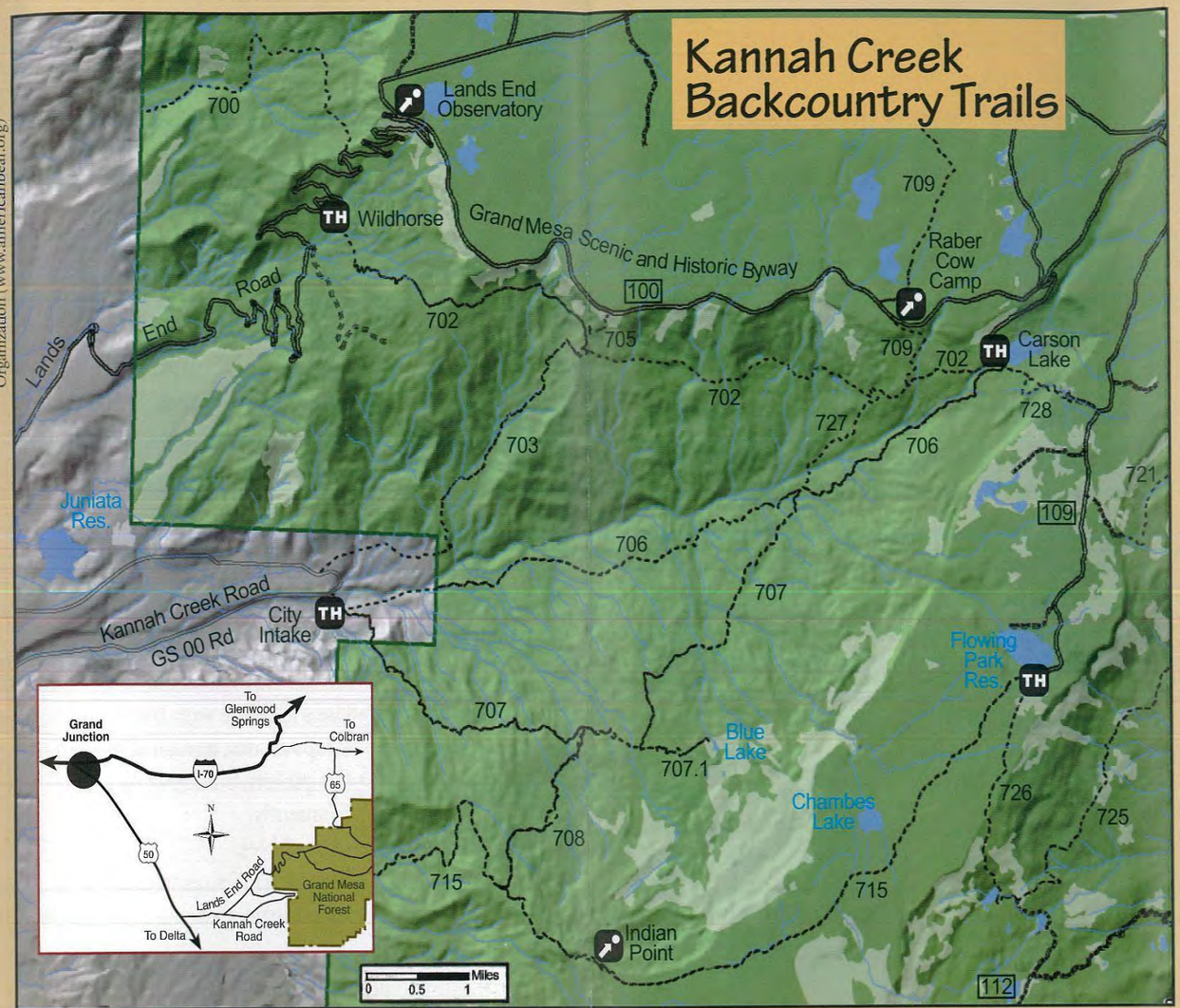


- Suspend food, garbage, and toiletries from a tree —10 feet off the ground and 6 feet from the tree trunk and supporting limbs.
- Keep tent and sleeping bags free of food smells, including the clothes you cooked in. Sleep well away from the cooking and food storage area.



U.S. Forest service

Carson Lake.



Trail Tips

You will notice a significant change in vegetation and temperature as you climb in elevation from the hot and dry lower Kannah Creek basin to the cool forest on top of the Grand Mesa.

- Summer temperatures in lower Kannah Creek basin may exceed 95° F.
- Bring plenty of drinking water and food. Stream sources are limited and require adequate filtration before drinking.
- Weather conditions change rapidly. Be prepared for changing temperatures, lightning, and afternoon thunderstorms.
- Yield to horse travel by stepping off the trail on the downhill side of the trail.

Trail Information

The following trails are non-motorized.

White Water Basin Trail #700 3.8 miles Difficult
Steep terrain, crosses branches of Whitewater Creek. Scenic vistas from upper sections.

Coal Creek Trail #702 9.0 miles Moderately Difficult
Follows and contours under the rim of the Grand Mesa. Oak brush at lower Wild Rose TH, Douglas fir and aspen forest at upper Carson Lake TH. Trappers cabin north of trail in aspen.

Coal Creek Basin Trail #703 4.7 miles Difficult
Steep climb from City Water Intake TH up the Coal Creek Basin drainage to the junction with Coal Creek Trail.

Switch Back Trail #705 .9 miles Moderately Difficult
Descends off the rim of the Grand Mesa through a series of switchbacks. Drops 1000 feet in less than a mile.

Kannah Creek Trail #706 8.8 miles Moderately Difficult
Follows Kannah Creek. Trail climbs 3,800 feet from the City Intake trailhead to Carson Lake trailhead on the Grand Mesa. Trail begins in piñon/juniper and ends in aspen and spruce/fir forest on top.

Spring Camp Trail #707 7.7 miles Difficult
Provides a loop off of Kannah Creek Trail and access to Blue Lake and Indian Point Trails. Trail is steep, especially the lower 2 mile.

Blue Lake Trail #707.1A 0.8 miles Moderately Difficult
Forks off Spring Camp Trail, travels through open aspen and spruce/fir to NW corner of Blue Lake. Blue Lake is a small lake that sits just below the rim of the Grand Mesa. It is surrounded by talus fields and has good views of the Mesa rim. Angling opportunities for cutthroat trout.

Indian Point Cutoff #708 2.1 miles Difficult
Primarily used by those wishing to climb to the top of Indian Point from Spring Camp Trail. Spectacular views of Kannah Creek Basin, La Sal Mountains, Uncompahgre Plateau and Grand Valley.

Deep Creek Trail #709 1.5 miles Moderately Difficult
Forest Views of Kannah Creek and LaSalle Mtns. Trail continues 1.5 miles to Coal Creek Trail. Lower TH located at Raber Cow Camp.

Indian Point Trail #715 9.0 mile Difficult
Steep climb. Primarily accessed from Lands End Road (FS 100) traveling into Kannah Creek Basin from atop the Grand Mesa. Upper TH accessed from Flowing Park Road (FSR 109). Trail climbs and descends through meadow and oak/aspen to the terminus at the western edge of National Forest Boundary onto BLM public land.

Farmers Trail #727 1.4 miles Difficult
Connects Coal Creek Trail to Kannah Creek Trail. Steep. Oak brush/ aspen. Loop opportunity to/from Carson Lake.

Carson Lake #728 1.0 miles Moderately Difficult
Gradual uphill from Carson Lake to the rim of Grand Mesa to Matchett Cow Camp from Flowing Park Road. Scenic vistas of Kannah Creek Basin and the rim of the Grand Mesa. Angling opportunities at Carson Lake.