



# Canyoneering



Canyoneering is a growing recreational sport on the Colorado Plateau. It often requires scrambling and climbing through tight, rugged canyons. It may involve swimming, rappelling, or other technical rope work. Please use care during canyoneering trips, including during approaches and exits, as delicate plants, fragile biological crust, and other sensitive park resources exist in many off-trail areas and within many canyons.

Small group sizes should be considered for any backcountry travel for the safety of participants as well the protection of park resources. Follow minimum impact practices such as Leave No Trace.

Information on Capitol Reef canyoneering routes can be found on various websites and in other publications. Search the internet for details.

## Description of Canyons

The multiple rock layers found at Capitol Reef offer a diverse canyon environment. Many popular canyoneering routes pass through the Navajo and Wingate sandstone formations. Drainages within the Wingate Sandstone often

follow natural vertical fracturing and form deep canyons with long drops and tight vertical canyon walls. Canyons within the Navajo Sandstone tend to be shallower and typically produce tight slots, potholes, and shorter drops.

## Permits

Free day-use permits are required for canyoneering. Permits can be obtained in person at the visitor center or via email.

Permit information can be found on the park website. If planning to camp overnight, a free backcountry use permit is required.

## Restrictions and Concerns

For the protection of park resources, *canyoneering groups are limited to a maximum of eight people*, with some exceptions for certain routes near the Fruita area. Ask at the visitor center for details.

Capitol Reef is a clean canyoneering area. Minimum impact techniques that do not damage or destroy rock or other park resources are **required**:

- The installation of new fixed anchors (bolts, pitons, etc.) is prohibited.
- Bolts may be replaced only if an existing bolt is unsafe.
- The use of power drills is prohibited.
- Where it is necessary to leave or replace

existing webbing, the webbing should be black or closely match the color of the surrounding rock.

- Protection may not be placed with the use of a hammer except to replace existing belay and rappel anchors and bolts on existing routes, or for emergency self-rescue.
- Physical alteration of rock faces is prohibited.
- It is prohibited to wrap webbing or rope, or rappel off any arch with an opening greater than three feet.
- The intentional removal of lichen or plants from rock is prohibited.

Potential seasonal closures or use limits may be in effect during your visit. Check at the visitor center for current closures or limits.

## Safety

- Canyoneering is an inherently dangerous activity. Groups should fully research the intended route and be prepared for unknown obstacles. Many canyons require full commitment once started and escape is often not possible.
- Know the latest weather information. Be familiar with the terrain and know your escape routes. Deadly flash flood waters can travel from many miles away with travel times of 10 hours or more. Don't enter slot canyons or rugged terrain during stormy or wet weather.

- Consider your group's experience and skill level before selecting and entering any canyon. Groups can overestimate their abilities and become delayed or stuck.
- Notify a friend or family member of your plans before leaving.
- Rescue resources in a canyon environment can be limited and groups may be forced to self-rescue. Many canyoneering routes are in remote, seldom-visited areas with no cell phone service.