

COLORADO NATIONAL MONUMENT

<https://www.nps.gov/colm/index.htm>

Colorado National Monument is a 20,000-acre (8,000 ha) park that was created in 1911 to protect the natural formations of this area of Colorado. The monument is comprised of 11 canyons, and old-growth juniper pinion habitat, and is transected by the historic Rim Rock Drive Road. The park receives around 500,000 visitors annually and is a premier destination for road cycling and offers 45 miles of developed hiking trails, over 300 rock climbing routes and wildlife viewing opportunities. Many of the management challenges centre around Rim Rock Drive and the multi-use nature of the road. Rim Rock Drive is 23 miles in length and was built along the canyon rims. The road connects two park entrances and provides access to Glade Park, which is a rural ranching and farming community. The Monument is also adjacent to Colorado's Grand Valley and the cities of Fruita and Grand Junction, is located off Interstate 70 midway between Denver, CO and Salt Lake City, UT.

The primary management challenges are how different user groups interface with each other, the geology of the park, and the natural resources. Colorado National Monument was created because it is an extraordinary example of erosion, and as a result of that erosion, rockfalls need to be cleared from the road on a daily basis. Our desert bighorn sheep herds are regularly on the road, along with cyclists, horse trailers, RVs (we have an 80-site campground), 100+ tour buses a year, daily commuters, and all other visitors as well as park staff. Additionally, because of the urban proximity and access via the road, the park is a destination for suicides. This results in our rangers responding to multiple callouts each week for suicidal subjects. We also have driver fatalities due to accidental drive-offs (3 in the last year) which result in complicated vehicle removals.

I believe if I can find a similarly situated park (urban-adjacent natural park with cliffs and a road), it will most likely share common challenges and provide opportunities to learn from one-another. I am interested in learning on all fronts, including:

- what road safety measures have been put into place.
- how park staff have worked with local communities to help solve problems.
- if suicide prevention measures have been implemented.
- whether tensions have been successfully managed between different user groups.
- if rockfall/geohazard mitigations have been tried.
- if there is a visitor use management strategy in place.
- how wildlife is managed on the roadway.

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