

CRACK CANYON WSA

VOLUNTEER MONITORING ORIENTATION:

WSA Citizen Monitoring Coordinator:

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BLM Field Office Location and Phone Number

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Setting and Terrain

Crack Canyon WSA is located in Emery County, Utah about 15 miles north of Hanksville and directly west of Goblin Valley State Park. It runs approximately 16 miles from northeast to southwest and 3 miles from northwest to southeast. The unit consists of 25,335 acres of publicly managed land bounded by roads and state lands overseen by the BLM Price Field Office.

Crack Canyon is part of the greater San Rafael Swell, a large, uplifted geologic phenomenon located in south central Utah and in fact includes a portion of the southeastern San Rafael Reef. Elevations range from 4,700 feet along the southern margin to 6,000 feet in the northeastern portion of the WSA. Vegetation consists primarily of desert shrub, salt brush, and pinion-juniper woodlands although most of the land is barren. Both threatened (Jones Cycladenia, Last Chance Townsendia) and endangered plant species (Maguire Daisy, Wright Fishhook) have been found within the WSA. The unit is home to cougars, desert bighorn sheep, wild horses, peregrine falcons, and eagles. Geologic features such as colorful badlands of eroded soils, cliffs, rock monuments, arches, and canyons that span 200 to 500 feet deep are abundant as are pictograph and petroglyph panels.

More than 99% of this study area has outstanding opportunities for solitude and recreation. In addition, visitors have the opportunity to recreate in a unique and other worldly landscape that offers dramatic desert views and challenging canyon terrain.

BLM Management Strategy

Crack Canyon WSA is managed in accordance with BLM Manual 6330 – Management of Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). Since WSAs are areas that have been recommended to Congress for potential designation as wilderness under the Wilderness Act, the guiding requirement of managing WSAs is the “non-impairment” principle. BLM is directed by policy to prevent any activities that would impair or degrade the area’s suitability for future consideration as designated wilderness. This means that BLM must prevent activities that are neither temporary or would create a new surface disturbance within the WSA.

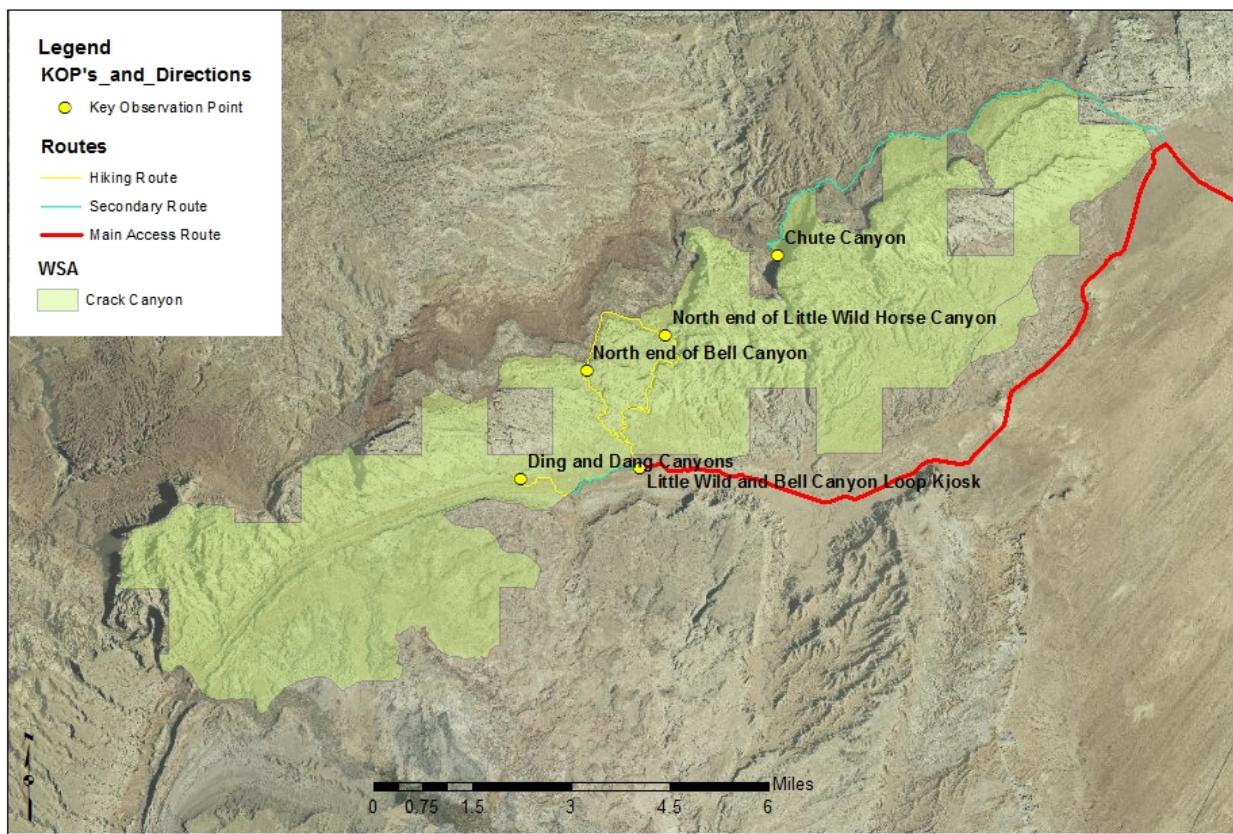
In the practical sense, this management strategy involves preventing the placement of new permanent structures. Construction of new trails or vehicle routes is prohibited. Motorized and mechanized activities are not permitted except on valid, existing routes authorized within the WSA. Vehicular or mechanical cross country travel is strictly forbidden except in emergencies. Commercial activities are also restricted. Landing aircraft is prohibited.

Permissible activities would include camping, backpacking, rock climbing, skiing, caving, hunting, and other primitive pursuits. Installing bolts for climbing is not allowable. Activities such as mountain biking, geocaching, rock hounding, gold panning, and aerial activities like hang gliding or paragliding may be permissible as long as they do not create new surface disturbance or establish the precedent of a new discretionary use in a WSA where it did not previously exist. Prior authorization to conduct non-primitive, mechanized, or surface disturbing activities must be obtained from BLM.

Monitoring Areas and Key Observation Points (KOP's)

Monitoring areas are general areas, trails, or routes within a WSA. Key Observation Points (KOP's) are exact locations of significant management interest. Management areas and KOP's could be of significant management interest because they are high-use, experience surface disturbance, or provide a viewpoint where pictures of the landscape can be taken to track impacts and/or changes to habitat over time. The following is a map and list of the monitoring areas of the Crack Canyon WSA, and their associated KOP's. The Crack Canyon WSA has three monitoring areas, and five KOP's. The three monitoring areas are: 1) Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons Loop; 2) Ding and Dang Canyons; 3) Chute Canyon.

Figure 1: All Crack Canyon KOP's



The following maps and tables show the exact locations and GPS coordinates for each Key Observation Point within each monitoring area. Following each table is a short description for reaching each monitoring area. All of the KOP's are located on established hiking trails within their respective monitoring areas. The Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons loop KOP's are located at designated points along the hiking trail, the Ding and Dang Canyons KOP is located at the entrance to the Canyon hikes, and the Chute Canyon KOP is also located at the canyon entrance. These monitoring areas have been chosen due in part to their popularity, and to ensure adequate monitoring of disturbances/impairments that such high levels of visitation can cause.

Monitoring Area 1: Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons

The Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons Loop is one of the Swells most popular hikes. The hike consists of slot canyons which involve some scrambling. It is approximately 8 miles round trip. Directions to the parking area are as follows:

- From Price, take Highway 6 traveling south. Continue on Highway 6 for approximately 60 miles, until Highway 6 intersects with I-70.

- Turn right at this intersection and drive west for 8.5 miles to the 4 Corners Mine Road Exit.
- Exit and turn left, traveling south on UT-24 for 24 miles, until reaching Temple Mountain Rd to your right.
- Turn onto Temple Mountain Rd and drive 5 miles until reaching Goblin Valley Rd.
- Turn left onto Goblin Valley Rd and continue for 6 miles until you reach Wild Horse Rd.
- Turn right onto Wild Horse Rd, and drive just over 5 miles to the Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons Trailhead.

Figure 2: Little Wild and Bell Canyons Loop

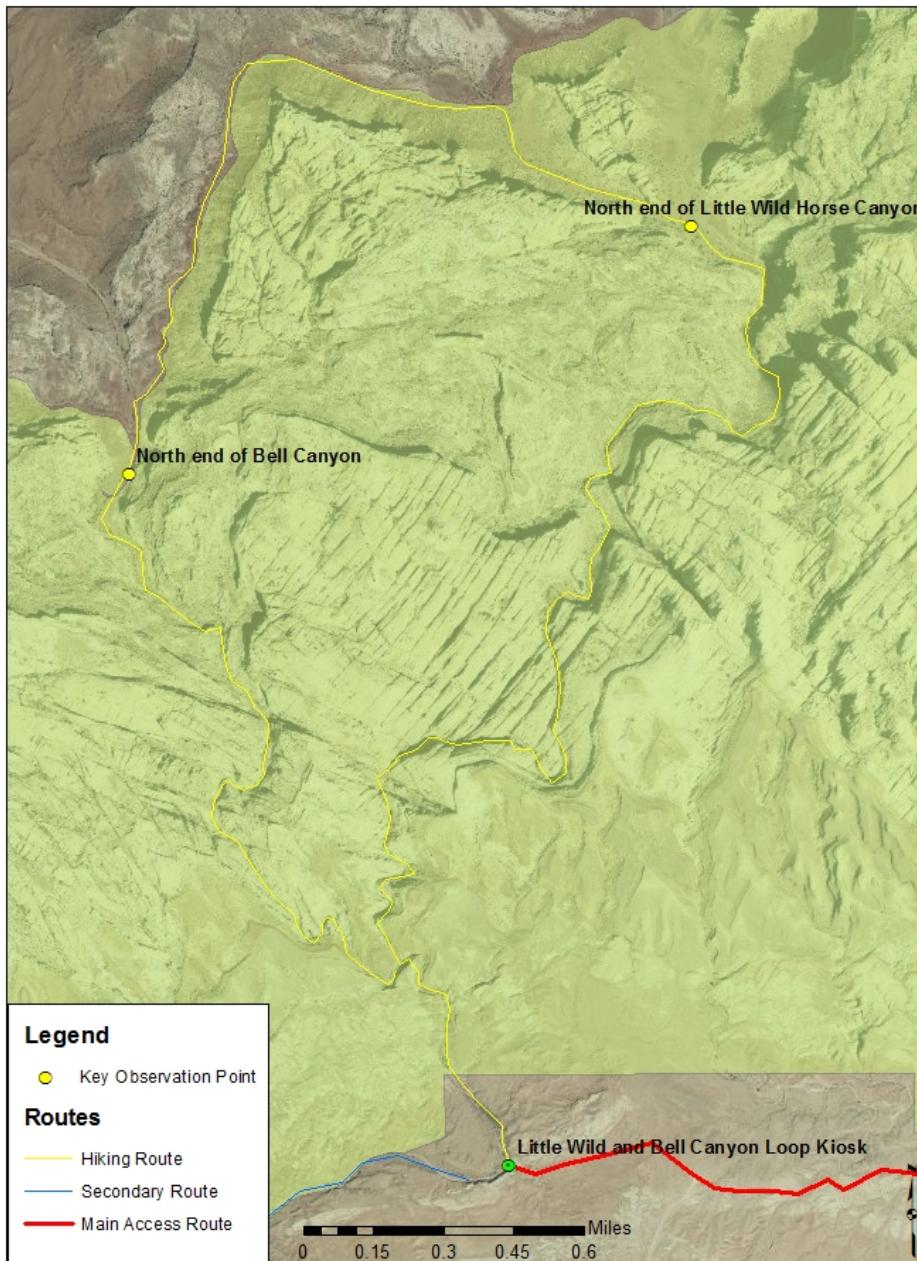


Table 1: Monitoring Area - Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons Loop

Key Observation Point (KOP) Name	Decimal Degrees		Degrees, minutes, seconds	
	Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons Kiosk	38.582583	-110.80232	38° 34' 57.3" N	110° 48' 8.35" W
North end of Little Wild Horse Canyon	38.611622	-110.795101	38° 36' 41.84" N	110° 47' 42.36" W
North end of Bell Canyon	38.603967	-110.817253	38° 36' 14.28" N	110° 49' 2.11" W

Monitoring Area 2: Ding and Dang Canyons

The Ding and Dang Canyons monitoring area is located near the Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons Loop parking area. From the Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons Loop parking area, continue traveling west on Wild Horse Rd. Drive on Wild Horse Rd for an additional 1.2 miles until reaching a gravel parking area. Park at this location, and begin the hike to the Ding and Dang Canyon intersection KOP. Ding and Dang Canyons intersection KOP is approximately 1 mile from the parking area. Volunteers are encouraged to explore the canyons and surrounding area for monitoring points of interest during their visit. Ding and Dang Canyons can be hiked as a 5 mile loop, but is slightly more challenging than the Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyon loop. A 4WD high-clearance vehicle is not required to access this monitoring area.

Figure 3: Ding and Dang Canyons

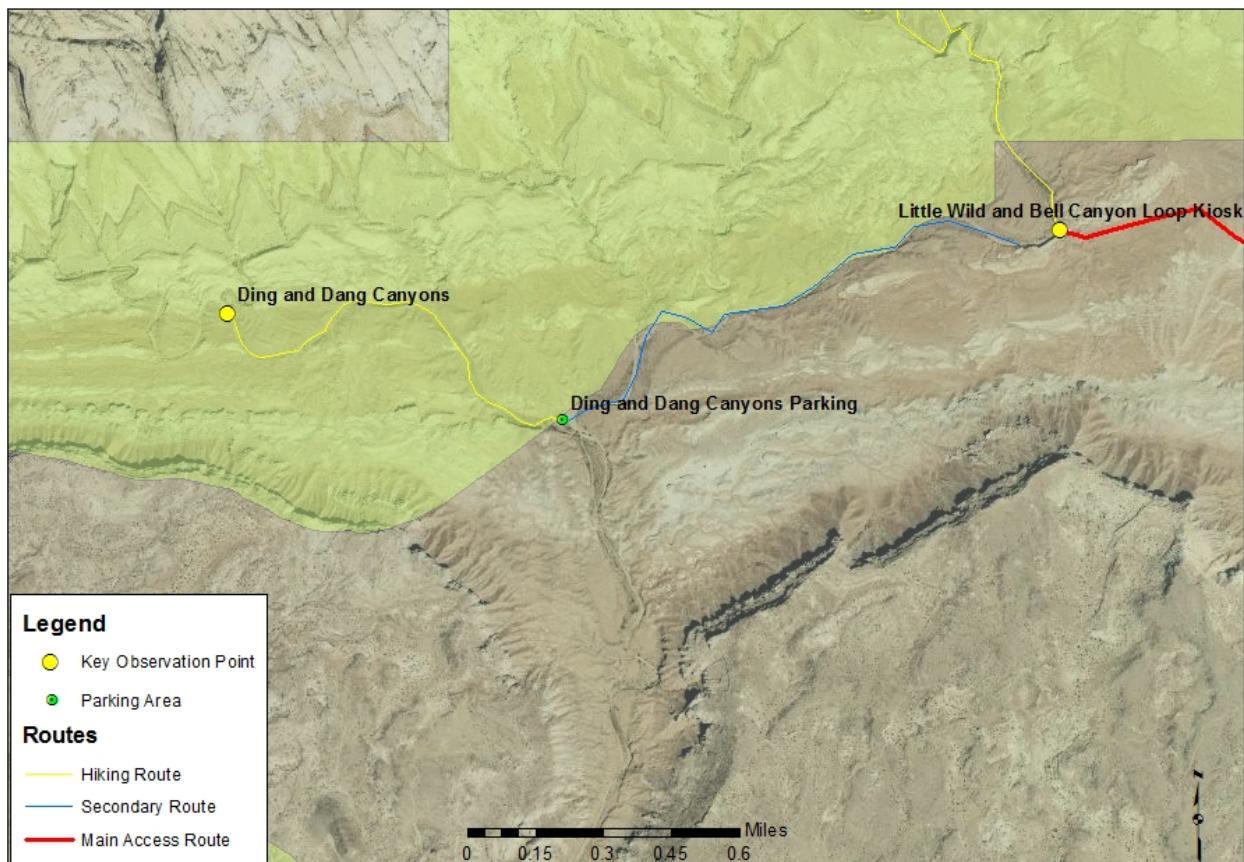


Table 2: Monitoring Area - Ding and Dang Canyons

Key Observation Point (KOP) Name	Decimal Degrees		Degrees, minutes, seconds	
	Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
Intersection of Ding and Dang Canyons	38.58	-110.8357	38° 34' 48.00" N	110° 50' 8.52" W

Monitoring Area 3: Chute Canyon

To reach the third monitoring area and KOP, volunteers will need to backtrack from the Little Wild Horse and Bell Canyons Loop Kiosk to the intersection with Temple Mountain Rd. At this point, turn left and travel north, up Temple Mountain Rd for approximately 8.3 miles until reaching the Chute Canyon trailhead. This road will become rocky and require a high-clearance vehicle.

Figure 4: Chute Canyon KOP

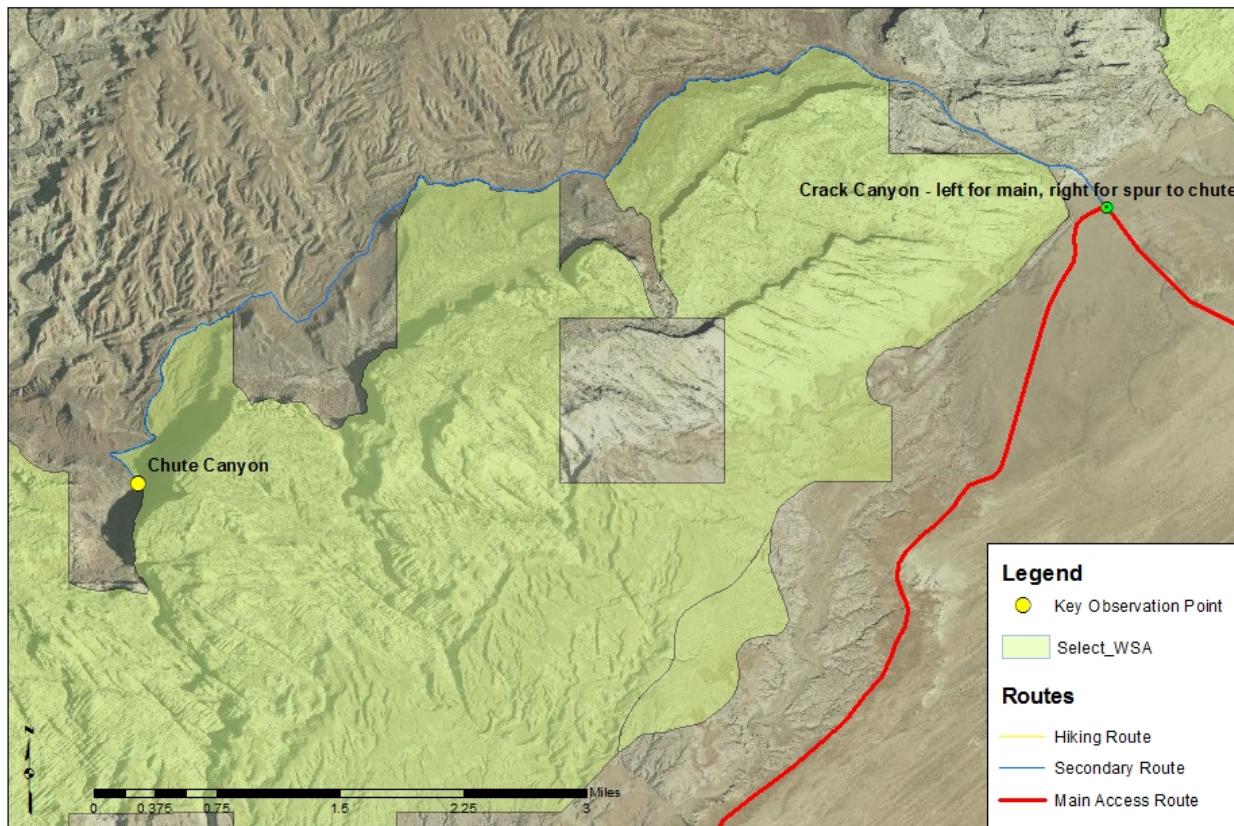


Table 3: Monitoring Area - Chute Canyon

Key Observation Point (KOP) Name	Decimal Degrees		Degrees, minutes, seconds	
	Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
Chute Canyon Trailhead	38.629032	-110.763403	38° 37' 44.52" N	110° 45' 48.25" W

Access Routes and Transportation

From Price, Crack Canyon WSA is approximately 100 miles, one way. Transportation to and from Crack Canyon WSA will be the responsibility of volunteers. All vehicles should be equipped with at least one spare tire, tools, and supplies to deal with emergencies. High-clearance 4WD and all-terrain tires are recommended for all vehicles, although 2WD low clearance vehicles can also reach the Little Wild Horse/Bell Canyon, and Ding and Dang Canyon Monitoring Areas. The Chute Canyon KOP cannot be accessed without a 4WD, high-clearance vehicle.

Signing

Portal signs and visitor kiosks have been placed at strategic access points off of main routes along the WSA. The WSA boundary at the end of authorized vehicle routes, fiber-glass carbonite signs and posts have been placed to notify the public that motorized access is not permissible beyond that point. Monitors should report the location of all signs and current condition to BLM.

Water Availability

Water is not available in the WSA. All water should be packed in for monitoring trips. During the hot summer months when temperatures can reach above 100°F, be sure to pack an adequate amount of water (1 gallon/person/day).

Services and Facilities

No services are available in the WSA although toilets, showers, and campsites can be found in Goblin Valley State Park. The nearby town of Hanksville (pop. 219) can be used to buy food, gas, and water although other supplies may be hard to come by in the small town.

Communications

Cell phone coverage in Crack Canyon is spotty at best. Use of satellite phones or SPOT locators is the only reliable means of communication with the outside world. Local residents in Hanksville have phones that you could request the use of in an emergency.

Resource Issues

The main resource concerns in the WSA are illegal OHV use, BLM sign vandalism, and litter.

Safety Recommendations

The following list of safety recommendations should be adhered to before and during monitoring visits. Volunteers should never compromise their personal safety for the sake of monitoring. Be vigilant at all times about the weather, terrain, and personal physical condition. It is best to prepare for monitoring by using a checklist for pre-trip packing. Be sure you have sufficient shelter, clothing, equipment, food, water (1 gal/person/day), light, first aid, and survival gear for existing conditions. Do not tamper with shacks, cabins, and/or mine shafts that are located near the WSA. Table 5 below summarizes the potential hazards volunteers may experience in the field, and recommended measures to manage the hazards.

Table 4: Risk Management

Hazard: Slipping, tripping or falling on rocky or uneven terrain.
Control measure: Be aware of conditions. Wear lug soled boots with good ankle support. Walk, don't run. Side step down hill. Carry hand tools on downhill side. Measure implemented through: tailgate sessions. Reminders prior to monitoring visit.
Hazard: Snakes, insect bites, bees, encounters with wild animals and poisonous plants.
Control measure: Walk slowly through brush. Be aware of surroundings. Wear long sleeved shirts, long pants, and leather boots. Avoid scented lotions. Know your plants. Carry medication if allergies exist. Avoid attracting predators and other hazardous wildlife by keeping a clean camp. Be bear aware and know how to react if encountered by bears or other wild animals. Measure implemented through: training on poisonous plant and animal encounters. Seasonal reminders.
Hazard: Unsafe tool use
Control measure: If using hand tools, make sure handles are in good condition. If handles are cracked, broken, or have mushroom heads, do not use. Keep axes and other cutting tools sharp. Chop away from body. Wear gloves, boots. Wear goggles to prevent eye injury. Measure implemented through: Use tools for purpose intended. Wear personal protective equipment. Proper training prior to use.
Hazard: Cuts, scrapes and splinters from fencing and/or barrier materials
Control measure: Use gloves, long sleeved shirts, long pants and boots. Keep first aid kit close by. Measure implemented through: Volunteer focus on monitoring rather than maintenance. Use tools for purpose intended. Wear personal protective equipment. Proper training prior to visit
Hazard: Sprains, strains from hiking, lifting loads, swinging tools, etc.
Control measure: Use caution crossing uneven terrain. Use proper lifting techniques. Avoid twisting if swinging tools. Wear boots when digging with spade or posthole diggers. Use legs not back to lift and carry tools or supplies to work site. Measure implemented through: Use tools for purpose intended. Wear personal protective equipment. Proper training prior to use. Hike with a group or in pairs.
Hazard: Weather related illness or injury. Extreme heat or cold.
Control measure: Monitor weather closely. Wear clothing suited to weather. Carry and drink plenty of water. Know signs of heat stroke, heat exhaustion, frostbite, hypothermia and know how to treat.

Measure implemented through: Check weather forecast prior to going to the field. First aid course recommended.
Hazard: Lightning or thunderstorm.
Control measure: Monitor weather closely and watch for approaching storms. Get to vehicle if possible. Stay away from trees, metal object and high ground. Measure implemented through: Check weather forecast prior to going to the field. First aid courses recommended.
Hazard: Flash flood
Control measure: Monitor weather closely when travelling in slot canyons as flash flood danger can be high and roads become impassable when wet. Watch flow in streams and washes, do not enter or cross if water is rising. Measure implemented through: Check weather forecast prior to going to the field. First aid courses recommended.
Hazard: Confrontation with verbal and/or abusive public.
Control measure: Do not engage in confrontation. Walk away. Use radio or cell phone communication to contact BLM or Law Enforcement if needed. Measure implemented through: Share contact information prior to each monitoring visit.
Hazard: Lost, missing, or overdue volunteer
Control measure: Leave a trip itinerary and your return time with your coordinator, friends, and/or family. Plan routes in advance and minimize deviation. Carry both hard copy maps, and gps units. Familiarize volunteers with monitoring location and equipment. Travel with a group or in pairs. Regroup at predetermined times and locations. Measure implemented through: All volunteers will be instructed on the WSA's, monitoring locations, and proper use of maps/navigational equipment through trainings and informational sheets.
Hazard: Motor vehicle breakdown or accident
Control measure: Scout the route. Drivers and vehicles should not attempt to drive into areas beyond their capabilities. Provide volunteers with vehicle safety checklist. Check weather forecast prior to going to the field. Relate vehicle requirements (4WD, high clearance, etc.) based on access route conditions to volunteers. Provide emergency contact information. Measure implemented through: Training provided to volunteers and through the use of tail gate safety sessions.

Monitoring Goals

- Monitor existing vehicle routes for widening, significant deterioration, or motorized use beyond closure points. Provide photos and GPS points at key locations. Report all violations observed. If you witness illegal activity, avoid any conflict and only attempt to get identifying information (license plates and photos) if you feel it is safe.
- Rake out any vehicle tracks found beyond closed routes to a point where they are no longer visible from the closure point. Place dead vegetation across closed routes to provide camouflage.
- Document and report signs that have been damaged or need replacing.

- Document and pack out modern trash or debris whenever possible. Objects that may be historic or older than 50 years should not be disturbed.
- Deconstruct fire rings found in the backcountry.
- Document with photos and GPS any permanent structures or surface disturbance found away from existing routes.
- Photograph outstanding scenery and wildlife that you encounter.
- Enjoy yourself and have fun. Take pride in your contribution to public land conservation.

Maps

The map below shows the location of Crack Canyon WSA within the state of Utah. The Price BLM office can provide more detailed topographic maps.

Wilderness Study Areas in Utah - Crack Canyon

