

Appendix A

Access and Visitor Management Plan for LaSunder Cave

All access to LaSunder Cave will require a permit. CCS will screen all applicants desiring access to the cave. CCS or the BLM will issue a cave permit and all cave users will be required to sign a LaSunder Cave Hazards and Stipulation Disclosure and Waiver of Liability form prior to entering the cave. CCS will maintain the cave portal gate, signs, logs and locks in coordination with the BLM. Users will gain access by receiving the gate lock key. The number of keys will be determined by the BLM and CCS. All applicants looking to access the cave for recreational purposes will be referred to CCS and could then be referred to one of Colorado's five (5) Grottos. A user may gain a permit and subsequent access to the cave directly from the BLM, however, the BLM will consult with CCS prior to granting general "recreational" access. All scientific, research, inventory and work trips must be approved and authorized by BLM.

Recreational visitation prescriptions may be amended if the LAC monitoring plan standards are reached and /or exceeded. The BLM will cooperate with CCS throughout the monitoring process, and will consult CCS during the determination process regarding changes to visitation policies.

USE LEVELS AND TRIP REQUIREMENTS

a. Recreational trips will be limited to 10 trips a year. There will be no more than 2 trips per month.

b. Each Grotto in the state will get two trips per year

c. Each Grotto will choose (or elect, it's up to the Grotto) trip leaders. Trip leaders are required to know the route to the cave; the Colorado Cave Survey and/or BLM will not give directions to the cave.

d. The requirement for trip leaders will be left up to each grotto, but they are strongly encouraged to use similar standards to the United States Park Service or the Williams Canyon project. Trip leaders should be physically up to the challenge of a 4 mile hike with almost 1,000 feet of elevation gain, some of which is over broken ground. They will be held responsible for the actions of everyone in their group, and if any damage is caused to the cave, consequences could include individuals or entire Grottos being banned from access.

e. Persons entering LaSunder Cave will be accompanied by an experienced Trip Leader.

f. Groups entering the cave will consist of at least three people including the Trip Leader, and no more than five people including the trip leader.

g. Cave users will prepare a Trip Plan and leave it with a responsible relative or friend.

The Trip Plan must include:

1. A list of persons by name who will be entering the cave.

2. Date of entry and estimated time and date of return.

3. Instruction to notify the Garfield County Sheriff if the caver does not return within a reasonable time after scheduled return.

h. Trip leaders will be required to lock the entry gate upon entering the cave and insure that it is locked upon exiting the cave.

i. All materials carried into the cave by those in the caving group must be removed and disposed of off BLM public lands. This includes ALL bodily waste, trash, etc.

j. No pets will be allowed entry to the cave.

USER ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

The following items will be required prior to authorizing entry into LaSunder Cave:

Equipment:

1. Helmet.
2. Main source of light: helmet-mounted light such as carbide or electric headlamp. Carbide ceiling burner lamps are prohibited in LaSunder cave, due to the low decorated ceiling.
3. Spare power source for main light, enough to keep it running at least 30 percent longer than expected length of the trip.
4. Spare parts for main light.
5. Two portable backup sources of light, such as rugged flashlights.
6. At least one pint drinking water in a rugged container.
7. Heavy clothes with long sleeves and legs, enough for 50-degree temperatures. Please consider using non-cotton clothing if possible, to help limit lint accumulation.
8. Rugged footgear, such as medium weight mountain boots.
9. Heavy gloves, such as leather work gloves
10. Mask or respirator for use when traveling over rat midden at entrance.

Recommended Optional Equipment

11. Knee pads, if you have sensitive knees.
12. Snack food, carefully packaged.
13. Magnetic compass.
14. Compact first aid kit, one for every two or three people.
15. Pack for supplies and spare equipment.

USER QUALIFICATIONS

1. General User.

- a. Proper Equipment.
- b. In good physical condition.
- c. Agrees with cave conservation principles.
- d. Agrees with proper safety practices.

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- e. Understands potential risks involved.
- f. Signs the LaSunder Cave Hazards Disclosure and Waiver of Liability form.
- g. Agrees to authority of trip leader.
- h. At least 16 years of age.

2. Qualified Trip Leader

- a. Meets all requirements of general user.
- b. Experienced with cave conservation principles.
- c. Experienced with proper safety practices.
- d. Experienced with gate procedures at LaSunder Cave.
- e. Knows how to find their way out of the cave.
- f. Agrees to enforce cave access rules especially cave conservation and insuring that everyone on their trip has signed the LaSunder Cave Hazards Disclosure and Waiver of Liability form.(Appendix D)
- g. Responsible for completing monitoring form for each trip.(Appendix E)
- h. At least 21 years of age.
- i. Knows how to locate the cave.
- j. Is willing to abide by the limits to trips imposed by the Cave Survey, i.e. no trips into or past the tight squeeze to the back of the cave (approx. 3,000feet into the cave). No trips are authorized to access the second level using the rope climb.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Before entering the cave, users will be instructed by trip leaders to:

- a. Leave formations untouched, even if broken.
- b. Prevent spreading mud, especially on formations.
- c. Remove all materials carried into the cave.
- d. Not leave marks, including carbide lamp soot, which will spoil the appearance of the cave for future visitors.
- e. Not disturb cave life.
- f. Follow the marked trail and not deviate from it. DO NOT ENTER the tight squeeze and/or passage at the back of the cave (approx. 2,100 feet into the cave) and DO NOT ENTER the side passage known as the Flamingo Crawl.

SELECTION OF TRIP LEADERS

The Colorado Cave Survey is responsible for approving trip leaders selected by the NSS approved Grottos of Colorado. Approved trip leaders MUST accompany the group and will be responsible for the group's safety and conduct. Of primary importance are the preservation of all cave resources and the safety of all individuals on cave trips.

The person wishing to become a trip leader will be required to satisfactorily demonstrate a working knowledge of the trip route, cave safety, application of procedures and trip leader responsibilities.. Successful completion of one trip into LaSunder Cave is required before the Colorado Cave Survey will evaluate the eligibility of the person wishing to become a trip leader.

Trip Leader Responsibilities:

Only those persons with current approval to act as a trip leader may do so and only for those areas specified. Leaders not adhering to these guidelines will lose their visitation privileges.

1. A trip leader's first priority is the safety of each member of the caving group. A leader's second priority is the preservation of all cave resources.
2. A trip leader may (and should) abort any trip when questionable safety practice, or behavior contrary to LaSunder Cave's visitation rules and regulations and/or cave conservation is demonstrated by any individual(s). A trip should also be aborted if any member of the team cannot physically continue or has problems overcoming obstacles. Trip leaders must be familiar with the current protocol for initiating a cave rescue at LaSunder Cave.
3. A trip leader should request a permit a minimum of one week before a proposed trip. Plan ahead. Spur-of-the-moment trips are not encouraged.
4. The trip leader must insure that each member of the group is physically able to complete the planned trip. Trips should be paced to the slowest member of the party.
5. The trip leader must inform each trip member of the rules and regulations that apply and must enforce them. He or she also insures that all trash is packed out and that historic, prehistoric, or other cave resource items are not disturbed.
6. Trip leaders may lead trips only into approved areas and must insure that all trip members remain on approved (or marked) trail at all times.
7. Trip leaders must insure that each trip member carries three independent light sources.
8. No human waste products (liquid or solid) may be deposited in the cave. Containers for holding these wastes should be carried by everyone on the trip.
9. Visitors are urged to remain quiet or speak softly (but not whisper) when traveling between the cliff entrance and the gate area within the cave, particularly if bats are observed to be present.
10. Passage beyond the tight crawl in the back zone, the Flamingo Crawl passage, and exploration of unsurveyed passages is strictly prohibited unless explicit prior permission is granted by both the BLM and CCS.
11. The trip leader is responsible for making sure the gate is locked upon entering and leaving the cave to prevent unauthorized entry.
12. The trip leader must prepare, and leave with a responsible person, a Trip Plan including a list of persons entering the cave, estimated time of return, and instructions to notify the Garfield County Sheriff if they fail to return within a reasonable amount of time after the scheduled return.
13. The trip leader is responsible for returning the key to the cave gate, the permit, Hazard and Stipulation forms signed by everyone on the trip, and a completed LaSunder Cave Monitoring Form within 5 days of the trip.

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SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, INVENTORY, DIGGING OR WORK TRIPS

Given LaSunder's history and relatively pristine condition and its valuable resources, scientific research and inventory trips will take precedence over recreational use. All research, inventory, digging, will be coordinated and authorized by the BLM prior to any activity beginning (See Appendix B *Guidelines for Cave Research*, and Appendix C for *Guidelines for Cave Digging Projects*). The inventory conducted for this cave is inconclusive for many resources and served as broad base general inventory for classification purposes to base management goals and objectives. Data specific to LaSunder Cave for paleontologic, mineralogic, biologic, and hydrologic resources is still needed. Permits for bona-fide research will be granted provided the researcher is able to provide the BLM an acceptable pre-research proposal and eventual research findings. The research potential of this cave should be maximized. Research will help create a sound data base onto which future management decisions can be made.

Work and inventory trips will be coordinated by the CCS and the BLM prior to any work taking place within the cave. Work trips *may* be done outside of the 2 month limit, but that will be determined by the CCS and the BLM on a trip by trip basis. A list of work opportunities should be developed and updated on an annual basis by the BLM and CCS.

CAVE PASSAGE OR CAVE CLOSURES:

Situations may arise where it will be necessary to close the cave for visitor safety (high levels of radon gas or histoplasmosis dangers) or to protect other resources (such as speleothems, paleontological resources, and biological resources). Cave users and other concerned individuals will be consulted during the analysis of a closure.