

Citation

Colorado Canyons Association

The Public Lands Foundation (PLF) presents the Colorado Canyons Association with its 2023 Landscape Stewardship Award and this Citation. The PLF grants this recognition to honor private citizens and organizations that work to advance and sustain community-based stewardship on landscapes that include, in whole or in part, public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The Colorado Canyons Association (CCA) works in three National Conservation Areas (NCAs) managed by BLM in western Colorado (McInnis Canyons, Dominguez-Escalante, and Gunnison Gorge). These landscapes are connected by the Gunnison and Colorado Rivers.

The CCA contributes significantly to BLM's youth education, volunteer, and river restoration programs. Since they serve a true cross-section of students in Delta, Montrose, and Mesa Counties, where over 30% of students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches, they are getting many kids into the NCAs who otherwise might not have the opportunity. Over 2,000 youth each year learn a STEM-based outdoor curriculum that meets Colorado Academic Standards. Over 1,300 students have participated in field trips, educational offerings, and raft trips. Cottonwood Days youth education event at Gunnison Gorge NCA reaches 400 sixth-grade students annually. The CCA has organized and provided volunteer educators for Cottonwood Days, which has been held annually since 2009 along the banks of the Gunnison River.

Over 600 community members have participated in hikes, lectures, and educational outings, including Leave No Trace education. CCA has contributed over 1,300 hours of volunteer time for river cleanups, riparian monitoring, monitoring and cleaning trails, citizen science projects, and youth education.

They have been instrumental in the Grand Junction BLM offices pursuing Gold Standard within the Leave No Trace organization. The offices and related NCAs are second in the nation of all BLM sites to attain this distinction. They have organized virtual volunteer lecturers and delivered three virtual educational community presentations for the Life Science Lecture Series as well as a Dark Skies Webinar. CCA has helped BLM begin the process of having Gunnison Gorge NCA certified as a Dark Sky Place by the International Dark Sky Association, and they have co-hosted an interpretive night sky tour there.

They have also organized volunteers for the Sieber Fire rehabilitation, sagebrush seed collection, grow out, and replanting effort.

The Public Lands Foundation is pleased to present the Colorado Canyons Association with its 2023 Landscape Stewardship Award and this Citation for invaluable contributions to the stewardship of America's public landscapes.

/s/ Mary Jo Rugwell

Mary Jo Rugwell, President

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