

A+ and MCCC: Differing Elements

	A+	MCCC	Why is the difference important?
Front Country	Retain Powerhouse Lane parking as the primary access point for Mill Creek Canyon, Formalize the secondary use of Potato Salad Hill with 5-10 allotted parking spots, distinct from the off-roading feature that is specific to Potato Salad Hill.	Both sides of the creek are important to consider in planning parking and access that allows for management actions that can limit use at appropriate levels for the canyon, minimize user group conflict and mitigate impacts on existing and future residential neighborhoods. Access from PSH provides better opportunities for orientation due to its location above the Powerdam and trails.	While parking on either side of the canyon at its entrance offers important access points, both currently and historically, they serve different purposes. Powerhouse Lane has served as primary access to recreation immediately outside of town. Currently, Potato Salad Hill allows Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Search and Rescue (SAR) teams to access the canyon without navigating the rocky ledge system at the beginning of the canyon, and avoids the congestion of primary access points during busy hours of the season. By moving the primary access to PSH, SAR and EMS will be forced to reconsider their primary access once again.
	Create designated 36-37 parking spots via striping with natural-colored rubber bumpers in order to maximize parking capacity of the lot.	Move the primary parking area to Potato Salad Hill and close off Powerhouse Lane to pedestrian and bike traffic. Restrict parking along Powerhouse Lane and strictly enforce parking code in the residential neighborhood.	Designated parking allows the BLM to effectively limit and manage the number of users within the canyon at any given time. Powerhouse Lane is already known and utilized as the primary access. Regular enforcement of parking at key access points, by corresponding agency to access point, is the best management practice to limit user impacts. Retaining the parking area at Powerhouse Lane is also the least impactful management solution for the impaired riparian area.
	Establish an electronic sign on either side of Mill Creek Drive to indicate the current parking status of the parking area.	Monitor parking and overflow through fee collection	An electronic sign is one of the first methods of deterrent to illegal parking at any access point to the canyon. By installing a sign on Mill Creek Drive, turn arounds will be limited, alleviating the concerns of Dream Drive residents.

	Maintain infrastructure on Powerhouse Lane and Potato Salad Hill as is, and individually evaluate each addition to infrastructure plans on a case by case basis.	Consider a bridge across Mill Creek in the Powerdam Area	Mill Creek Canyon was designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the stream has been listed as impaired due to dissolved oxygen and E. coli. Additional infrastructure in the area poses a question about even greater strain on the environment, especially the fragility of riparian areas in the overall desert ecosystem. A bridge would be helpful if people were consistently using it, but visitors frequently hop in the creek to cool off.
	Coordinate with future development for the proposed bike trail that will access Sand Flats Road.	Connect the Mill Creek Parkway to Sandflats in a way that separates bike and motorized vehicle traffic through both a bike lane on Sand Flats Road and designating a bicycle route up Powerhouse Lane and across the creek up the PSH access road.	A+ recommends that the BLM seek out the least impactful cyclist lane to access Sand Flats Road, but ascertain whether that be a part of the Mill Creek Canyon management plan or altogether separate.
Fees	Institute a fee collection system based upon Grand County residency require a daily pass for entrance, like that at Sand Flats Recreation Area, or provide a yearly fee option.	Fees should be used at the trailhead and in the Canyon	A+ proposes a fee collection system modelled off the success of Sand Flats Recreation Area.
	Establish a staffed booth with a swing-arm barrier at the beginning of the dirt road on Powerhouse Lane. Provide a vegetated screen to a gravel turn-around (located at the gated entry) and to the gated entry itself, if entry cannot be accommodated at that time.	Utilize iron ranger for fee collection.	At the primary entrance to Mill Creek, turning visitors around when the lots are full is a key aspect of pausing over-tourism. A staffed booth draws upon the success of Sand Flats Recreation Area and offers an opportunity for further education to visitors as well as an opportunity to point out alternative recreation areas.
	Implement a continually updating webcam feed of the Powerhouse Lane parking lot to allow visitors to see if there are any spots left in the lot before driving out in person. (This has been instituted successfully by Arches N.P.).	Utilize iron ranger for free collection and augment parking enforcement efforts.	Modeled on the success of Arches N.P., a webcam feed combines with the electronic sign on Mill Creek Drive to deter visitation at peak hours and allows visitors to see the status of the parking areas before driving up into residential areas.

	Entrance will be free to senior residents who are unable to pay through trail work, and those unable to pay to access the canyon will be able to pay for their admission through trail work, discounted passes or other BLM-approved means.	Use an “iron ranger” or QR code system for fee collection to park at Powerdam and Potato Salad Hill, and at any trailhead where fees may be deemed necessary.	Users, residents, and those who participated in the MCCC survey indicated by and large a desire to differentiate local users from tourists. With a locals-only fee collection system, specific to residents of Grand County, the BLM can tailor admission payment to individuals, allowing senior citizens to pay for their experiences in the canyon in a manner reflective of their ability to pay.
Back Country	Do not designate an official trail in the backcountry area of the canyon; no wayfinding signage should be implemented in this area.	Designate a trails system, as a lower priority than in other zones	The South fork (Right-hand) of the canyon represents one of the last remaining areas of quiet wilderness close to town. Trail designation in this area will surely change the nature of the experience visitors have sought in the past.
Trails and Signage	Formalize a paid trail stewardship program to work in concert with other entities performing work in the canyon.	Continue work as is, with separate entities performing work in the canyon and continue the piloted Trail Ambassador program	By implementing a <i>paid</i> position funded by entrance fees, Mill Creek Canyon will have a position dedicated to its overall wellbeing and to user responsibility. The stewardship program could provide an entry-level job for young people.
	Work with the Trail Ambassador program to provide educational resources to visitors to the canyon.	Coordinate with larger efforts in the area & work on a youth program. Involve Trail Mix with trails work and stabilization to keep it consistent with other trail work in the region.	It is important to consider the extent of knowledge and experience of those who have worked in the canyon for years, such as entities including Moab Solutions, Trail Mix and others. MCCC suggests the limited number of efforts within the canyon, while A+ proposes that this invitation be extended beyond MCCC suggestions.
	Do not designate an official trail system in the canyon.	Designate an official trail system in the canyon.	Designating an official trail within the canyon could greatly increase canyon use. Mill Creek already exists at the precipice of over-tourism. Users can be encouraged to use existing trails. Redundant and ecologically-damaging social trails will be blocked with natural materials.

Middle Country	Develop a local volunteer program through existing entities, and seek out the expertise of volunteer groups, nonprofits and individuals knowledgeable about the canyon and deeply involved in its resiliency.	Coordinate with larger efforts in the area & work on a youth program	A+ recommends that the BLM consider the wide range of experience that entities already working within the canyon have.
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A+ and MCCC: Similar Elements

	A+ Recommendations	MCCC Recommendations
Riparian Corridor	<p>Provide well-marked, clear trails in <i>designated</i> locations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing native vegetation and crusts • Provide opportunities for native revegetation of disturbed areas • Avoid damage to archaeological and other sites • Avoid unnecessary, redundant trails 	<p>Designate a trails system including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas where trails need to be hardened; • determine the level of trail building required based on use levels <p>Develop a long-term vegetation plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • native and non-native plant distribution and • create a revegetation plan once a trail system is designated.
	<p>Improve and regenerate native vegetation by discouraging users from social trails.</p>	<p>Include vegetation monitoring to guide future work</p>
	<p>Identify areas that are in need of “constructed erosion structures.” Install erosion control measures, which include blocking social trails, hardening certain trail sections, <i>only in a natural and sustainable manner</i>.</p>	<p>Identify locations for constructed erosion control structures</p>
Trails and Signage	<p>Include proper signage at appropriate locations in the entrance to the canyon, including information on: erosion control structures, safety, archaeological sites, ecology and biocrusts.</p> <p>Minimize use of signs in the backcountry and middle country, particularly upon entering the South Fork of the canyon</p>	<p>Signage should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trailhead signs with consistent info about erosion, crusts, safety etc. • Information so visitors understand actions harm or help <p>Minimize use of signs in backcountry and middle country</p>
Back Country	<p>Consolidate routes to allow for stabilization and repairs in the Back Country, but designating these trails should not be as high a priority as the areas previously listed. Instead, monitoring of user impacts should be of the highest priority in the Back Country to mitigate erosion and destructive tendencies.</p>	<p>Develop a monitoring plan with a timeline for repeated data collection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No wayfinding signage in this zone • Trails may need maintenance, but are not heavily hardened • Monitor use impacts – if methods for this don’t exist, develop them • Map current use impacts and levels
Middle Country	<p>Establish and utilize best management practices for trail work in the canyon and at parking areas.</p>	<p>Standardize trail work</p>

	Determine locations for wayfinding signage for visitors to find their way out of the canyon on primary trails. Monitor use through trail counters to access the overall impact.	Determine locations for critical signs for wayfinding. Signage should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be consistent with signage at trailheads & in other zones • Install a kiosk at each trailhead & wayfinding signs in key locations Consider using more trail counters in Middle Country areas to help assess impacts
	Consider visitation effects on <i>all surrounding</i> neighborhoods.	Create a plan for the Highland trailhead and engage neighbors and monitor use at other access points
Front Country	Maintain the main route to accommodate high use, directing people to the Falls. The route should be continuous, clear, with minimal obstacles to prevent confusion and multi-trailing. Best management practice calls for a “single lane” of trail including wider pull out zones in areas to allow passing (Trail Class 2 or 3). Place wayfinding or directional signage in key locations to direct hikers to the waterfall and the parking area; signage should not encourage visitors to travel into the south fork (Right Hand) of Mill Creek. Place clear signage prohibiting bicycles beyond the Powerdam and off trail.	Place wayfinding or directional signage in key locations to assist new hikers in finding the falls and parking areas. Place clear signage prohibiting bicycles off trail.
	Install trail counters in several locations to gather data and monitor use. Use data to quantify how many visitors access various Front Country areas.	Install trail counters
	Facilitate recovery of vegetative disturbed areas between the trails by planting desert shrubs and utilizing vertical mulch for better delineation and definition.	Incorporate revegetation actions in areas off trail
	Designate stream crossings and design and maintain erosion control structures or work after flash floods as needed.	Designate stream crossings and harden stream crossings when applicable

	Place effective signage addressing graffiti issues at the junction and safety issues at the waterfall. Involve local archaeologists in decisions about interpretive signage for archaeological sites, including signage about not carving into canyon walls.	Involve archeologists and create informational signs and addressing graffiti
	Provide visitors with information on other places to access or be near water recreationally, such as Mill Creek Parkway in town, Rotary Park, Lions Park, Ken's Lake, and the Colorado River. Work with entities that provide information to visitors to direct them to those places.	Provide information about other locations with recreational access to water
	Work with beaver experts in the area to assess the longevity and security of their habitats.	Make sure beaver dams and flash floods are considered in all trail crossing areas
	Utilize Trail Ambassadors, Trail Stewards and working entities in the canyon to mitigate and respond to flash flood damage.	Work with Trail Ambassador program and Trail Mix to mitigate user impacts on trails and educate visitors on their overall impact.
Enforcement	Continue the piloted Trail Ambassador program and involve the expertise of local entities (e.g., Moab Solutions, Rim to Rim Restoration, etc.). Enforcement efforts coordinated between the city, County and BLM are essential.	Coordinate law enforcement between the City, County and BLM as the group agreed without enforcement there is no way to change these behaviors. County funding for a trail ambassador program coordinated with the BLM can begin to address some of the safety and resource concerns. The 2021 pilot program should also develop a long term outreach and monitoring program for the area Monitoring use impacts in this zone should be part of the enforcement process.