

## PICKETWIRE CANYONLANDS

For a unique and unforgettable family experience, tour Picketwire Canyonlands. Located on the Comanche National Grassland south of La Junta, Colorado, these primitive canyons are home to the largest dinosaur tracksite in North America!



Guided auto tours are the easiest way to experience Picketwire Canyonlands and learn about its rich, colorful past. During the tour, knowledgeable guides will show you difficult to find dinosaur tracks, and the interesting prehistoric, historic, and natural features of the canyons.

This auto tour is the only motorized access into the canyons. Other ways to visit include hiking, mountain biking, or horseback riding. Because of the rugged terrain and long distances to various sites, these visitors need to plan carefully for hot weather conditions by carrying ample water and leaving very early.

## JOIN US!!

Don't miss this opportunity to spend a day exploring Picketwire Canyonlands with a knowledgeable tour guide! All day tours (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) are offered on Saturdays in April, May, June, September, and October. Sign up early because the tours fill up fast! Additional tour dates may be available to groups. Call the USDA Forest Service at 719-384-2181 to make your reservations.

Tours are offered through a cost share agreement between the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association (GARNA), a non-profit organization, and the USDA Forest Service. They cost \$15 per adult and \$7.50 per child. Due to rough roads, visitors will need their own four-wheel drive high clearance vehicle. Visit our website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc/coma/palo/index.htm>



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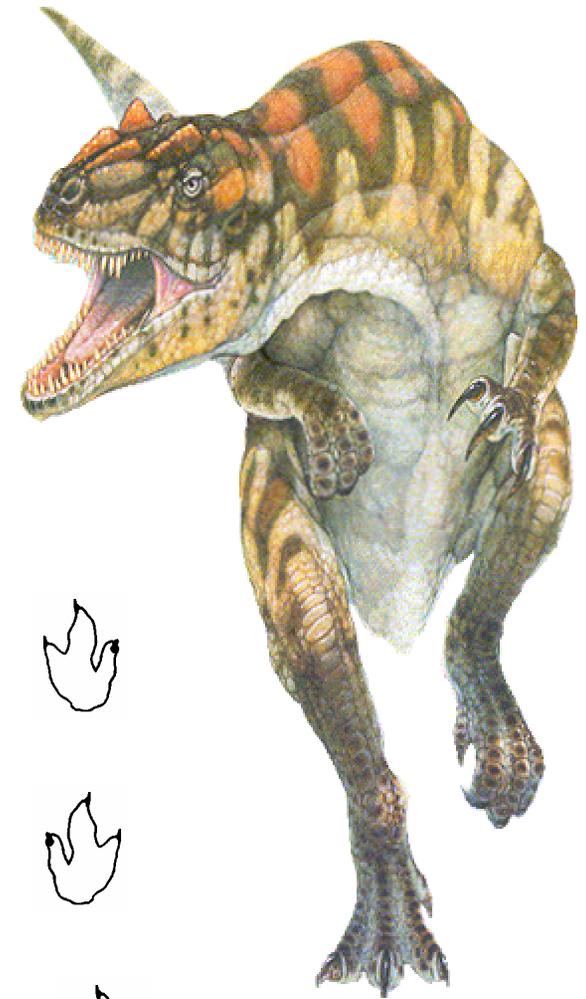


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## TOUR SCENIC PICKETWIRE CANYONLANDS



## **DINOSAUR TRACKS**

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Located on the banks of the Purgatoire River in southeast Colorado, this dinosaur tracksite is the largest documented assemblage of trackways in North America.

Over 1300 prints in 100 separate trackways extend across a quarter mile expanse of bedrock. Apatosaurus and Allosaurus are two types of dinosaurs that left prints in the mud over 150 million years ago.



This tracksite has given scientists interesting insights into the social behavior of dinosaurs. Tour guides will tell you what scientists have learned and show you difficult to find small tracks made by a carnivorous dinosaur or theropod. Without a guide you will miss the whole story of the tracksite!



What did cowboys think of these tracks? How did a young schoolgirl reveal these tracks to the world? Why did the rock in the track bed crack so uniformly? Guides will answer all these questions and more!



## **ROCK ART**

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Those huge dinosaurs weren't the only prehistoric visitors to the canyons. Rock art images, together with the remains of dwellings, stone tools, and pottery, shed light on the lives of prehistoric people. "Rock Art" is the term used to describe images pecked or painted on rock surfaces by prehistoric people. Rock art can be difficult to find but guides will take you to some of the best sites in the canyons.

## **SPANISH EXPEDITION**

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According to legend, a group of Spanish treasure seeking soldiers died in the canyons without benefit of clergy. Thus, in the sixteenth century the river was named El Rio de Las Animas Perdidas en Purgatorio (the River of Souls Lost in Purgatory). Later, French trappers shortened the name to "the Purgatoire." Early Anglo travelers on the Santa Fe Trail could not pronounce "Purgatoire" and hence further corrupted the name into "Picket Wire."



## **EARLY SETTLERS**

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In the 19th century, Hispanic and European settlers homesteaded in Picketwire Canyonlands. Guides will take you to an early Catholic Church and cemetery, which was built on land donated by Damacio Lopez. You will also visit Rourke Ranch, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, and learn how pioneer Eugene Rourke's ranch grew from a 160-acre homestead in the late 1800s to an over 50,000-acre cattle empire still owned by the Rourke family into the 1970s.