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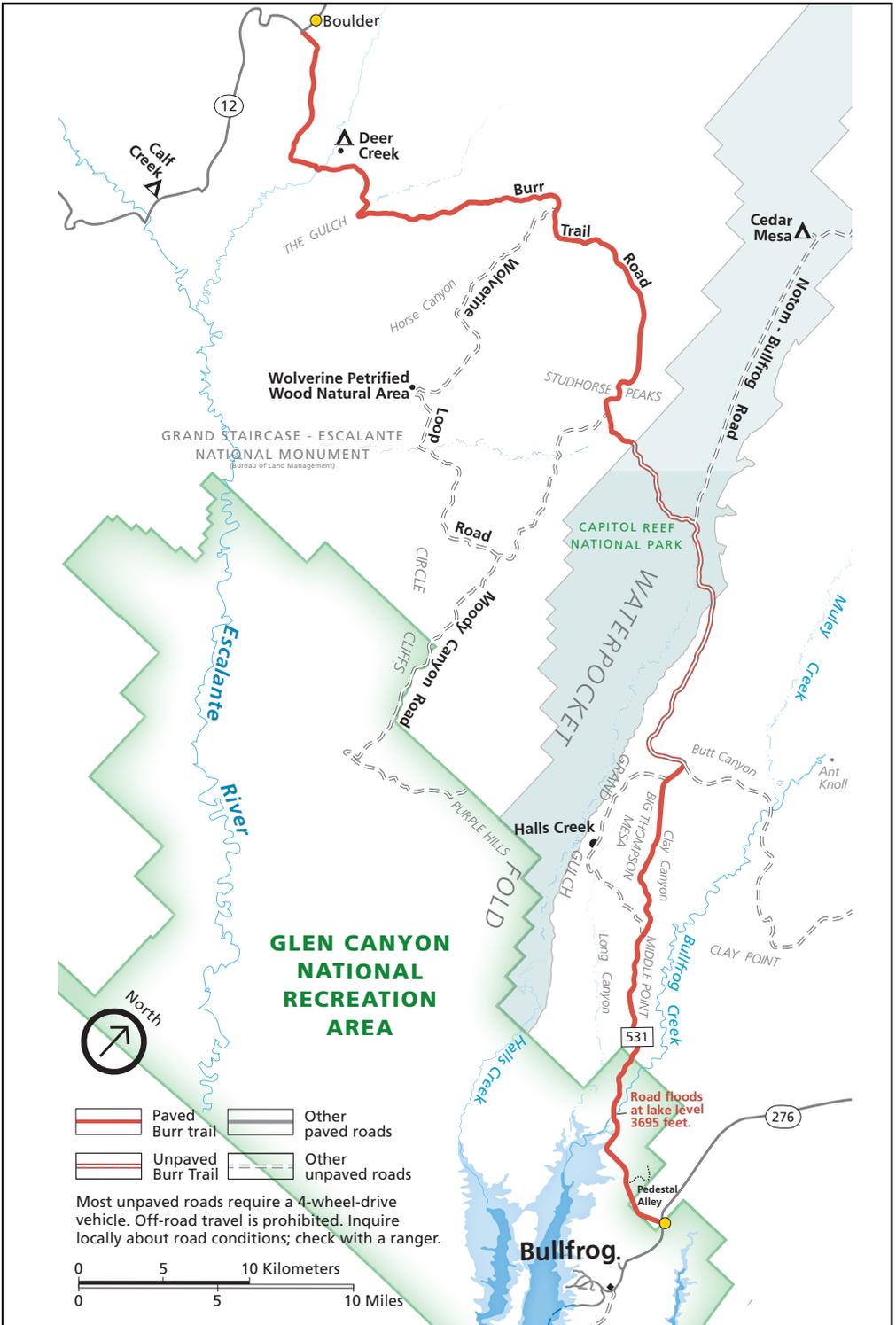
Glen Canyon National Recreation Area  
Rainbow Bridge National Monument



# Exploring The Burr Trail



# Map of the Burr Trail and Surrounding Area



# Travel Utah's Beautiful Backcountry Along the Burr Trail

Located just outside the northeast region of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area in Bullfrog, the Burr Trail offers excitement for the adventurous explorer. Views of features like the Henry Mountains, Waterpocket Fold, the red Circle Cliffs, Long Canyon, and Pedestal Alley await the traveler who wishes to explore this interesting road. To fully enjoy the journey always be well prepared. Make sure you have plenty of water, a first aid kit, proper footwear, sunscreen, a hat and a means of communication.

Important Numbers:

911 for emergencies

Bullfrog Visitor Center: 435-684-7423

Capitol Reef Visitor Center 435-425-3791

Escalante Interagency Visitor Center 435-826-5499

Now get out there and explore!

## History of the Trail

John Atlantic Burr was born in 1846, during his family's journey from New York to San Francisco on the SS *Brooklyn* while sailing across the Atlantic Ocean. Once they arrived, Charles and Sarah Burr then set out to Salt Lake City with their new baby. As part of the early Mormon pioneers, the Burr family eventually moved south in 1876 and founded the town of Burrville, Utah.

John Burr grew up to be a cattle rancher in the rugged backcountry of Utah. Living in such a desolate area, he needed to develop a route to move his cattle between winter and summer ranges, as well as to market. This cattle trail through the rough, nearly impassible country around the Waterpocket Fold, Burr Canyon, and Muley Twist Canyon came to be known as the Burr Trail.

# Driving the Burr Trail

The Burr Trail connects Bullfrog and Boulder, passing through Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Capitol Reef National Park, and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

**Please note:** Although in dry weather the Burr Trail is easily accessible to passenger cars, wet weather may make the road impassable even for 4-wheel drive vehicles. Check with rangers or local officials for weather and road conditions. Recreational Vehicles and trailers are not recommended.

## Tips for a safe and enjoyable trip:

- Pack out what you pack in. Carry out all trash and food scraps. Help keep wildlife wild by not feeding them human food.
- Always take plenty of drinking water with you. One gallon per person per day is recommended. Make sure to eat to balance electrolyte loss and bring snacks.
- Flash floods happen in an instant here. A storm can appear out of nowhere, sending water flooding into a canyon. If you see or hear a threat of rain or storms, **DO NOT RISK** your safety for the scenery. Never enter washes or narrow canyons when it is raining or threatening to rain.
- Check with a ranger or official for road and weather conditions before starting your trip.
- Warning: there is limited cell service in this area. Leave your trip itinerary with someone so you can be located in case of car trouble or other mishaps.
- Leave the scenery as it is. Do not write or carve on rocks, do not disturb plants or wildlife. Take only pictures, visit with respect and leave no trace.

## Mile by Mile Guide to the Burr Trail

Set your odometer to zero and follow along with this booklet! Whether traveling to Bullfrog or Boulder, this mile by mile guide will help point out junctions, trailheads, side roads, and scenic views, as well as provide some interesting information about the geology, plants, and human history of the area.

**Please note:** Mileages indicated in this booklet to not allow for side trips. Your odometer may not reflect the exact distance listed here. Please keep this in mind as you look for roads, trails and scenic features.

**Miles  
from  
Bullfrog**

**Miles  
from  
Boulder**

**0.0**

**67.0**

### **Burr Trail Joins Utah Highway 276**

To the south, Highway 276 continues to Bullfrog. From Bullfrog, one can take the Charles Hall Ferry across Bullfrog Bay (part of Lake Powell) to Halls Crossing, if it is operational. Check before you come with Utah Department of Transportation at 435-684-3088. To the north, Highway 276 intersects Highway 95 northwest of Hite.

**2.0**

**65.0**

### **Bullfrog South Primitive Camping Area**

(Currently closed)

**3.6**

**63.4**

### **Bullfrog North Primitive Camping Area**

(Currently closed)

**4.8**

**62.2**

### **Pedestal Alley Trail**

This 3-mile (4.8km) roundtrip hike is suitable for all skill levels and leads to interesting pedestal rocks. The trail is marked with cairns (small rock piles), and there is no shade or water. Spring and fall are the best seasons for this hike. Take sufficient water and wear a hat when hiking this trail. The parking area is located on the south side of the road and the trailhead is found across the road on the north side.

**5.1**

**61.9**

### **Bullfrog Creek Crossing**

When Lake Powell is at full pool, water can extend up the wash as far as the road! After a rain, the wash can be wet and muddy. Use caution when entering this wash if the streambed is wet.



#### **Bullfrog Creek Crossing**

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**7.9**                      **59.2**                      **Glen Canyon National Recreation Area Boundary**

This area between Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and Capitol Reef National Park is a section of Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. To the north is an excellent view of Clay Canyon.

**9.6**                      **57.3**                      **View of Navajo Mountain**

To the southwest is the rounded form of Navajo Mountain. Known geologically as a laccolith, this mountain was formed by igneous magma (molten rock) which pushed up under the already existing sedimentary layers. To the west is the Waterpocket Fold, a colorful eroded fold of rock layers nearly 100 miles (162 km) long but only a few miles wide. To the south, Upper Bullfrog Bay and Upper Halls Creek Bay can be seen.

**12.4**                      **55.3**                      **View of the Henry Mountains**

Like Navajo Mountain, the Henry Mountains are also laccoliths, formed when magma pushed overlying sedimentary rock up into a dome. Much of the sedimentary rock has since been eroded away, exposing the igneous rock underneath. Five distinct peaks make up the Henry Mountains, from west to east they are:

- Mt. Ellen:                      11,615 ft (3540 m) elevation
- Mt. Pennell:                      11,371 ft (3466 m) elevation
- Mt. Hillers:                      10,723 ft (3268 m) elevation
- Mt. Ellsworth:                      8,235 ft (2510 m) elevation
- Mt. Holmes:                      7,930 ft (2417 m) elevation



**Northern view of the Henry Mountains. From left to right: Mt. Ellen, Mt. Pennell, and Mt. Hillers**

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The Henry Mountains were among the last mountain ranges in the continental United States to be named. When Major John Wesley Powell saw them in 1869, during his exploration of the Green and Colorado Rivers, they did not appear on any official map. Powell first called the mountains the “Unknown Mountains” but later named them for Professor Joseph Henry, who was Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute at the time. Each of the peaks were named for the members of the Powell expedition, and Ellen was John Wesley Powell’s wife.

12.6

54.5

### **Halls Creek Overlook via BLM Road 12200**

This road, located on the west side of the Burr Trail, provides another access route to Halls Creek Overlook. It is 7.1 miles (11.4 km) to the overlook. Although longer it may be less rough for passenger cars, however it is still a fairly rough backcountry road and may have rocky and steep grades in certain areas. When it is wet, the road may be impassable for all types of vehicles.

18.8

48.3

### **Halls Creek Overlook/Halls Creek Narrows**

Halls Creek Overlook road branches off to the west. It is 3 miles (5 km) to the overlook. The road is very rough and may not always be passable for passenger cars, high clearance and 4-wheel drive are recommended. When it is wet, the road is impassable for all types of vehicles.



**The Waterpocket Fold from Halls Creek Overlook**

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At the overlook, there is a superb view of the Waterpocket Fold, Brimhall Natural Bridge, and the large, colorful expanse of the desert environment. Beginning 50 to 70 million

years ago, the Waterpocket Fold formed from tilted sandstone layers that were later eroded into cliffs, arches, and Brimhall Natural Bridge is an unusual double arch, named for Dr. Dean Brimhall, an authority on prehistoric Native rock art in Utah's rugged canyon country. A rough 2.5 mile (4 km) trail descends the cliffs and leads across the valley floor and into the canyon to Brimhall Bridge. The trail is difficult to hike and involves wading. It should be attempted by experienced hikers only!

Experienced hikers can continue their adventure by hiking through Halls Creek Narrows. *Please be aware this is an unmarked route that is 22.4 miles total roundtrip, requires wading and scrambling, is subject to hazards such as flash floods, rock falls and canyon obstacles, and should be completed over three to four days with the aid of map reading and navigation experience.* A backcountry permit is required for overnight trips, available at the Bullfrog Visitor Center.

19.7

47.3

### **Junction with Starr Springs Road**

Starr Springs Road gives access to the Henry Mountains; a high clearance 4-wheel drive vehicle is needed. Starr Springs is 21 miles (33.8 km) to the east, on the east side of the Henry Mountains. There is a BLM campground at Starr Springs, and from there the road connects in approximately 5 miles (8 km) with UT Hwy 276.

27.5

39.6

### **Capitol Reef National Park Boundary**

Here is a distant view of the Waterpocket Fold, a 100-mile (161 km) long bend in the earth's crust, extending from Thousand Lake Mountain to the north to Lake Powell to the south. At about the time that the Rocky Mountains were being uplifted - 60 to 70 million years ago - the layers of sedimentary rock here were warped and bent into a spine of rock several miles wide. Weathering and erosion have exposed the various colorful layers and carved the Navajo sandstone into cliffs, canyons, caves, alcoves and basins or "pockets" which collect and hold drainage water. John Wesley Powell named this remarkable geologic feature the "Waterpocket Fold".

The formation to the north is composed of Bentonite clay. When wet, this clay can make the road impassable.

28.5

38.6

### **The Post/ Lower Muley Twist Trailhead**

This was once the site of a roundup corral and a cabin, but is now merely a point of reference.

To the south is a spur road leading to a parking area. A 6.5 mile (10.5 km) one way trail from the parking area leads to Lower Muley Twist Canyon. Within a few miles of the parking area are some of the largest water pockets found in the Waterpocket Fold.

29.0

38.1

### **Surprise Canyon Trailhead**

Surprise Canyon is a short, 2 mile (3.2 km) roundtrip hike that crosses a wash and leads into a short canyon in the Waterpocket Fold.

30.8

36.2

### **Junction with Notom Road**

The road to the north parallels the Waterpocket Fold, gives access to several canyons and washes which offer good hiking possibilities, passes through the town of Notom and meets Hwy 24 just east of Capitol Reef National Park. There are two primitive campgrounds along the road: Cedar Mesa and Bitter Creek.

30.9

36.1

### **Peek-a-Boo Arch**

This arch is visible on the skyline to the northwest. Some say this arch resembles an unblinking eye in the horned head of a giant lizard stretched out along the sandstone slope of the Waterpocket Fold.



**Peek-a-Boo Arch**

© NPS / BRENT & DAWN DAVIS



### Bottom of the Burr Trail Switchbacks

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31.6

35.5

### Bottom of the Switchbacks in Burr Canyon

Here, in the Burr Canyon, the Navajo sandstone has been completely eroded away, leaving a huge notch in the Water-pocket Fold. The Burr Trail switchbacks steeply up through the canyon.

Originally, only the switchbacks were named the Burr Trail, a route used by cattlemen in the late 19th century to move cattle back and forth between winter and summer ranges. Today, the entire road from Bullfrog to Boulder is known as the Burr Trail.

Although the views are spectacular, do not stop on the switchbacks. Cars ascending the switchbacks have the right of way.

32.8

34.3

### Top of the Switchbacks/ Lower Muley Twist Canyon Trailhead

The scenic view to the east is superb. Just to the west is a picnic area and the trailhead to Lower Muley Twist Canyon. Muley Twist Canyon was so named because it is so narrow and twisty that it would twist a mule to get through it!

A hike through the Lower Muley Twist Canyon can be done as a long day hike or as an overnight trip by starting and



### Top of the Burr Trail Switchbacks

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ending at The Post parking area. Hiking the entire canyon from the trailhead on the Burr Trail Road and back is best done as a two to three day trip. A backcountry permit is required for overnight trips, available at the Bullfrog Visitor Center.

This route is not an official, maintained trail. Route conditions including obstacles in canyons change frequently due to weather, flash floods, rock falls and other hazards may be present. **Route finding, navigation, and map reading skills are critical. Backpacking experience is a must.** Maps are available at the Capitol Reef and Bullfrog Visitor Centers. The highlight of the hike is a deep, narrow, twisting canyon with large alcoves. Beginning at the trailhead on the Burr Trail Road and hiking down canyon to The Post trailhead necessitates leaving a vehicle at each end. If you do not have two vehicles, turn around when you get to the sign indicating The Post cutoff trail.

33.0

34.0

### Wash Crossing

This crossing can be difficult or impossible if the wash is wet.

34.0

33.2

### Upper Muley Twist Canyon Trailhead

This route is not an official, maintained trail. Route conditions including obstacles in canyons change frequently due to weather, flash floods, rock falls and other hazards may be present. Although you will find cairns along this hike, a topographic map is highly recommended. **Route finding, navigation, and map reading skills are critical. Backpacking experience is a must.** Maps are available at the Capitol Reef and Bullfrog Visitor Centers. A backcountry permit is required for overnight trips, available at the Bullfrog Visitor Center.

This hike provides narrow canyons, multiple arches, expansive vistas and a clear view of the Waterpocket Fold. The trailhead is located on the west side of the Burr Trail Road, 2-wheel drive vehicles will be able to navigate the .3 miles (.5 km) past the trailhead, after that a high clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicle is necessary for the remaining 2.9 miles to the Strike Valley Overlook parking area.

From the parking area it is a 1.7 mile (2.7 km) hike up the wash to Saddle Arch where the rim route is marked by a sign. This route is a loop trail. From the loop trail, you are able to connect to the Narrows route. The Narrows are 2.3 miles (3.7 km) beyond Saddle Arch, marked by cairns. Hiking through the Narrows requires difficult climbing using hand and toe holds. Continuing up the canyon where the trail drops into the bottom of a wash, an NPS sign marks where the trail exits the canyon.

36.0

31.4

### Piñon/Juniper Forest

Here, at an elevation of 6,000 ft (1892 m), is a “cold desert zone” which has different plants and animals than lower-elevation desert ecosystems. This zone is characterized by such plants as sumac, sagebrush, blackbrush, piñon pine and juniper and animals such as bobcat, mountain lion, deer, and bighorn sheep.

Both piñon pine and juniper trees were utilized by Native Americans and early settlers. The piñon produces tasty, nut-like seeds which can be roasted, ground, or eaten raw. The juniper cones (which look like berries) are edible and are used as a flavoring in gin. Although not related to the true cedars of the Mediterranean, the fragrant wood of the juniper was often used for “cedar” shakes, boxes, and chests.

Today these trees are protected, and vital to the habitat of the area. Do not remove them.

36.2

30.8

### **Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Boundary**

Here the unpaved portion of the road ends if you are traveling towards Boulder, or begins if you are heading towards Bullfrog.

To the east is a panoramic view of the jagged, brilliantly colored west side of the Waterpocket Fold. All five peaks of the Henry Mountains can be seen from this viewpoint, and far in the distance are the red mesas and buttes of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

Surrounding this area are the red Circle Cliffs, named by John Wesley Powell. The great oval arena within the uplifted circle of cliffs eroded from the center, exposing the red sandstone cliffs which enclose it.



**View of the Henry Mountains and Waterpocket Fold**

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37.9

29.2

### **Wolverine Loop Road**

This 28 mile (45 km) loop road leads to a beautiful but remote and rugged area near Wolverine Canyon. Many side roads lead from the Wolverine Loop Road and the road is not well marked. 4-wheel drive vehicles may access some of these side roads; others are accessible only by foot or horseback.

This area features stunning examples of petrified wood, but remember that collection of petrified wood is not allowed on National Park Service lands or within Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.

42.6

24.6

### **Road to the Lampstand**

This road leads 5 miles (8 km) one way to the Lampstand, an unusually shaped butte.



**View of Boulder Mountain before Long Canyon**

© NPS / BRENT & DAWN DAVIS

**45.0**                      **22.1**                      **This road also leads to the Lampstand**

**48.7**                      **18.6**                      **Wolverine Loop Road**

This is the other access point for the 28 mile (45 km) loop road located on the western side of the Burr Trail.

**50.1**                      **17.3**                      **Entrance to Long Canyon**

Here, the road enters Long Canyon, and will follow this colorful canyon for the next 7 miles (11 km). The lighter, golden sandstone crowning the red cliff is known as the Diadem.

As you enter or exit the canyon there is a pull out with scenic views to the southeast.

**55.0**                      **12.4**                      **Long Canyon**

This narrow canyon is enclosed by sheer walls of Wingate sandstone which tower hundreds of feet above the road. The sandstone has fractured and eroded, forming alcoves. Some of the dark red sandstone has been leached by water to a whitish shade, and black desert varnish stains the vertical walls.

55.5

12.9

### **Singing Canyon**

This quick and easy slot canyon is known locally for its acoustic properties. Be careful, at the end of the canyon is a steep dry fall. The pullout for parking is located on the east side of the road.



56.8

10.2

### **The Gulch**

The Burr Trail leaves Long Canyon here at its confluence with its sister gorge, The Gulch, and climbs onto the lower slopes of Boulder Mountain.

60.7

6.7

### **Deer Creek Campground**

This small campground is located at 5,800 ft on BLM land. There are seven campsites (\$10.00 per night) and no potable water. Due to size constraints it does not accommodate travel trailers.

#### **Singing Canyon**

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61.2

6.0

### **Sandstone Sand Landscape**

Sand dunes, created millions of years ago by wind-blown sand, were covered over by other layers of sand and pressed into stone. Gradually, these dunes were again exposed as the overlying sandstone was eroded away, creating the appearance of hardened, petrified dunes. Today, the light-colored Navajo sandstone, rounded into domes and hills, resembles the sand dunes from long ago.

67.3

0.0

### **Junction with Utah State Route 12/Boulder**

The Burr Trail ends (or begins) here at Boulder, Utah on State Route 12. Located in Boulder are services such as food, fuel and lodging as well as Anasazi State Park. Thirty-two miles (51.5 km) south is the town of Escalante; 40 miles (25 km) north over Boulder Mountain is the town of Torrey.

**Back Cover: Burr Trail  
Junction in Boulder**

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