

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
Rainbow Bridge National Monument

Canyons of the Escalante

Information and Hiking Guide



Everett Ruess linocuts taken from
Everett Ruess: A Vagabond for Beauty
by W. L. Rusho, published by Gibbs-Smith.
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These days away from the city have been the happiest of my life...It has all been a beautiful dream, sometimes tranquil, sometimes fantastic, and with enough pain and tragedy to make the delights possible by contrast.

- Everett Ruess from a letter to his friend Bill soon after beginning his journey.



The Escalante Canyons include some of the most remote, wild, and beautiful country in the Southwest. The Escalante, the last river in the continental United States to be named, meanders slowly between towering canyon walls. Its tributaries, also deeply entrenched in sandstone, contain arches, natural bridges, and waterfalls. The area is reminiscent of Glen Canyon before Lake Powell and offers some of the finest opportunities for desert hiking on the Colorado Plateau.

BASIC INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATION AND INFORMATION

Public lands in the Escalante area are administered by the National Park Service (Glen Canyon National Recreation Area), the Bureau of Land Management (Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument), and the U.S. Forest Service (Dixie National Forest).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ESCALANTE AREA:

Escalante Interagency Visitor Information Center,
PO Box 511
Escalante, UT 84726
435-826-5499

EMERGENCIES

National Park Service:
Escalante Ranger Station 435-826-4315
24 Hour Dispatch 800-582-4351

Bureau of Land Management:
Escalante Office 435-826-4291

U.S. Forest Service:
Escalante Ranger District 435-826-5400

Garfield County Sheriff: 435-676-2411

From within Garfield County: 911

BEFORE YOU GO

PERMITS

Please obtain a free Backcountry Use Permit from the Interagency Visitor Center in Escalante or at established trailheads. These permits help provide important statistical information which assists resource monitoring and management. Route itinerary information can help personnel locate hikers should an emergency occur or a search effort for overdue hikers be necessary.

Permits for commercial trips are required, and a fee is charged. Organized groups such as hiking clubs, Boy Scouts, and school groups also need permits. Contact the Interagency Visitor Center or appropriate agency for a determination as to the type of permit required.

MAPS

The waterproof Trails Illustrated map, USGS topographic maps, the Escalante Resource Area Recreation Map, and other publications are available for sale by the Glen Canyon Natural History Association at the Escalante Interagency Visitor Center.

Topographic maps may also be ordered from the USGS, Public Inquiries Office, 125 South State Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84138.

Utah road maps and multipurpose maps may be obtained from the Utah Travel Council, Council Hall, Salt Lake City, UT 84114.

WATER

Water availability varies from hike to hike. An abundance of springs may be available on some hikes; other hikes may have no water at all. Always filter or boil all water since *Giardia* or other pathogens may be present.

WEATHER

The best months for hiking the canyons are March through mid-June and September and October. Springtime weather may vary from warm days and cool nights to rainy and even snowy conditions. Summer months bring very hot temperatures while autumn usually promises pleasant hiking weather. Winter temperatures may dip well below freezing.

Thunderstorm season is from mid-July through September and is the period when flash flood danger is greatest. Flash floods may occur anytime, however, so keep an eye on the sky - especially before entering a narrow canyon. Camp above the flood plain each night to avoid an unpleasant “midnight surprise.” Remember that storms several miles away may cause flash floods where you are, even though the skies may be clear above you.



MINIMUM-IMPACT CAMPING

The increasing popularity of wildland recreation has led to unprecedented demands on our backcountry, resulting in greater impact on the resources we all love and enjoy.

Many areas have been “loved to death.” The desert is not indestructible rock and sand; it is a fragile ecosystem, and scars take years to heal. Proper low-impact hiking and camping are required to preserve this pristine desert country. By being courteous and thoughtful, we can leave the area as we would like it left for us. There are certain requirements for Glen Canyon NRA. Please review and practice the following minimum-impact regulations and guidelines:



GROUP SIZE: Large groups cause more impact to trails and campsites than do small groups. Large groups concentrate human waste. Large groups are more intrusive and diminish the wilderness experience for others. For these reasons, the recommended group size limit is eight persons. The maximum number group size allowed in the Escalante backcountry is twelve. Pack and saddle stock are limited to twelve animals.

BACKCOUNTRY TRAVEL: When hiking, walk on slickrock or sand whenever possible. Stay on established trails and avoid creating new ones. Never cut switchbacks. Cryptobiotic soils (the dark crust

of lichens, fungi, algae, and moss which binds desert soils) is easily damaged when walked upon and may take years to regenerate. In canyons, walk in or along streams so that high water will erase your footprints. Following these practices will prevent erosion and soil damage.

CAMPSITE SELECTION: When possible, choose an existing campsite with no vegetation or organic soil. Sandy or slickrock benches make the best sites. All campsites should be at least 100 feet, preferably 200 feet, from water sources to prevent contamination. Do not make “improvements” such as digging trenches or building rock structures. Avoid trampling vegetation around the perimeter of your camp. When leaving your campsite, rehabilitate the area by scattering dead leaves or twigs. Make sure that nothing has been left behind.

CAMPFIRES: Fire rings, charcoal, soot stains on rocks, and garbage in fire pits all leave unsightly scars. Charcoal from modern fires may contaminate archaeological evidence, making it impossible to date ancient campfire remains. For these reasons, fires are not allowed within Glen Canyon NRA in the Escalante district and are discouraged on BLM lands.

SANITATION: The dry desert climate often preserves waste before it can decompose, so extra diligence is required. For human waste, dig a “cat hole” six to eight inches deep and at least a quarter mile from Lake Powell or 100 feet from nearby water sources. Carry out toilet paper in a plastic bag. Washing should be done at least 100 feet from water sources. Use only biodegradable soaps, and pour wash water on the ground away from springs and streams. Carry out all trash and garbage.

PETS AND LIVESTOCK: Dogs threaten wildlife and may prevent hikers from seeing any animals. Dogs foul campsites, trails, and streams, so their excrement must be disposed of in the same manner as human waste. Dogs may get into trouble in this rugged country. For their own safety, to prevent intrusions on others, and for your convenience, pets are best left at home. Dogs and other companion animals are prohibited from entering Coyote Gulch within the boundaries of GCNRA. (This prohibition does not apply to guide dogs accompanying visual impaired persons or to hearing ear dogs accompanying hearing impaired persons.) This prohibition includes all dogs or other pet animals used to carry or transport recreational equipment or food.

CAMPING GEAR: Brightly-colored packs and tents shrink the wilderness by being so noticeable. Use drab-colored gear and camp where your tent will not be easily seen.

NOISE: Loud noises, yelling and radio music disturb others who may be enjoying the quiet solitude of the canyons. Please observe quiet hours after dark.

ABOUT THE AREA

CULTURAL HISTORY

Various cultures have utilized area resources for thousands of years. The Ancestral Puebloan (“anasazi”) culture is the most conspicuous, but evidence of other cultures, including Paleo-Indian, Fremont and Paiute are present. The Hole-in-the-Rock trail and historic site is a reminder of Mormon pioneer heritage and uranium mining claims date from the boom of the 1940s and 1950s.

If you encounter archaeological or historical sites, please treat these irreplaceable resources with care. Do not camp in or near these sites nor climb on them. Resist touching petroglyphs or pictographs. Collecting pieces of pottery, arrowheads or any other item is against the law which is strictly enforced. Heavy penalties may be imposed. Remember that your descendants will also surely want to learn from and enjoy these places.

WILDLIFE AND WILDFLOWERS

FAUNA: The rather sterile appearance of canyon country belies the wealth of animal life that it hosts. Blacktailed jackrabbits, ravens and other birds, and a variety of small lizards are the most common animals encountered. Watch for collared lizards which are very patient and offer unusual photo opportunities.

Large mammals, such as mule deer, beaver, and coyotes may be spotted occasionally. A small population of desert bighorn sheep inhabit the rugged canyons and slickrock mesas east of the river, but they are rarely seen.

While not frequently seen, scorpions and rattlesnakes are present. The best precautions against an unpleasant experience are to avoid reaching into piles of leaves or under logs or rocks and to check your boots and pack before putting them on each morning.

FLORA: Plant communities vary from pinyon-juniper woodlands in higher elevations to riparian zones where Fremont cottonwoods and willows predominate. In between are blackbrush/Indian rice grass, shadscale, and sagebrush communities. Among the most unique sights are the “hanging gardens” found clinging to sandstone walls where seeps provide plentiful water. Delicate maidenhair fern is the most common plant found here.

Springtime presents delightful opportunities to photograph and enjoy such wildflower species as the claret cup, cliffrose and Fremont barberry, while shooting-stars, scarlet gilia and bearded beardtongue bloom through the summer.

ROCKS AND CLIFFS

Geologic formations exposed in the Escalante Canyons are sedimentary layers deposited millions of years ago during the Triassic and Jurassic periods. These layers were alternately deposited by shallow seas, vast deserts and sluggish streams. Listed below are the predominant rock layers found in the canyons. Please note that formations are listed in order from lower to upper layers.

CHINLE FORMATION: Laid down by meandering streams and shallow lakes, this multi-colored formation is seen in the upper reaches of east side tributaries. It erodes fairly easily, undercutting the Wingate sandstone above, resulting in boulder strewn slopes. This formation is found predominantly in the Circle Cliffs area.

WINGATE SANDSTONE: Deposited as sand dunes when a huge desert covered the region, this formation, when undercut by the Chinle below, forms angular vertical-walled cliffs.

KAYENTA SANDSTONE: This formation has alternating hard and soft layers laid down by sluggish streams. Where exposed, the Kayenta forms ledges and terraces.

NAVAJO SANDSTONE: This sandstone was also deposited as desert dunes and varies in color from white to yellowish and light orange. Lying above the erosion-resistant Kayenta, it forms domes and rounded surfaces. The Navajo is the primary formation found in those canyons which flow to the river from the west. Most arches and natural bridges in the area are found in this formation.

CARMEL FORMATION: Deposited by shallow seas, this siltstone-like formation was formed during the Jurassic Period. Its color varies from maroon and purple to gray and brown. Found west of the river in the Harris Wash, Egypt and Early Weed Bench trailhead areas.

FLOATING THE ESCALANTE RIVER

The Escalante River flows in exquisite desert canyons before emptying into Lake Powell, some 80 miles from its source. However, the river's potential for running is limited. Generally, only peak spring runoff flows are runnable. While high water periods may vary, peak runoff usually lasts for about two weeks, but many occur anytime from early April through May. Check with the BLM or NPS in Escalante for current conditions. The following information may be useful in planning a float trip on the Escalante.

WATERCRAFT

An inflatable kayak is preferred for running the Escalante. The water is quite shallow and boats must be able to slide over rocks and gravel without structural damage. Rubber rafts are not recommended because of their width and bulk; hard shell craft are often damaged due to the numerous obstructions. Depending on your take-out point, weight will be a factor as some take-outs require a hike of up to three miles with an elevation gain of 800 to 1000 feet. Therefore, choose a craft that is light and maneuverable for the float as well as the hike out.

PUT-INS/TAKE-OUTS

The best put-in is where Highway 12 crosses the river, fourteen miles east of Escalante. Floaters may take out at the confluence of Coyote Gulch and the Escalante River, but a strenuous hike up a steep sand dune via "Crack-in-the-Wall" to the trailhead at Fortymile Ridge is required; the elevation gain is nearly 900 feet.

You may also paddle across Lake Powell down the Escalante Arm and around to Hole-in-the-Rock. This take-out requires only a 1/2 mile hike, but the elevation gain is a steep 600+ feet and requires climbing over boulders and ledges to reach the top.

The easiest take-out is to have a motor boat pick you up on Lake Powell. Call the Bullfrog Marina at 435-684-2233 or the Halls Crossing Marina 435-684-2261 to arrange a pickup. Both are roughly 40 lake miles from the Escalante River.

Low water is the biggest obstacle to float trips. A flexible schedule is required to have your trip coincide with high water. Check frequently with the BLM or NPS for current conditions. Water volume generally doubles with the addition of water from Boulder Creek and Deer Creek, about six miles downriver from Highway 12. Portaging or lining boats through riffles may be required. Several fences also cross the river, so floaters must remain alert.

HIKES IN THE ESCALANTE

ROADS AND TRAILHEADS

Utah Highway 12 is the major route to the Escalante area, with side roads leading to established trailheads or starting points.

The historic Hole-in-the-Rock road begins five miles east of the town of Escalante and continues south 57 miles to the Hole-in-the-Rock historic site where Mormon pioneers built a road down to the Colorado River. Trailheads can be reached by taking the Harris Wash, Egypt, Early Weed Bench, Red Well, Hurricane Wash, or Fortymile Ridge roads (all signed at their intersections with the Hole-in-the-Rock road).

The Burr Trail begins at Boulder, Utah, and continues 66 miles to Highway 276 near Bullfrog. Trailheads for Deer Creek and The Gulch are along this road.

The Wolverine road leads south from the Burr Trail 19 miles east of Boulder, and the Moody Creek road leads south from the Burr Trail just west of Capitol Reef National Park. There are no established trailheads along these roads, but they provide access to the Wolverine Petrified Wood Natural Area, Horse Canyon, Silver Falls Creek, Moody Creek, and others.

The Hell's Backbone road leads north around the upper reaches of Death Hollow and Sand Creek and connects to Highway 12 at the town of Escalante and again three miles west of Boulder. Trailheads for The Box and Death Hollow are along this road.

Only Highway 12 and the Burr Trail (for most of its length) are paved. Travel conditions on the other roads may vary, depending on the season and recent weather, so check at the Escalante Interagency Visitor Information Center for current conditions.

THE HIKES

The canyons of the Escalante River offer many fascinating trips. The Escalante is rugged country with no formal trail system. Hikers should be experienced in the use of map and compass and thoroughly familiar with the techniques of canyon and slickrock hiking. Maps and other information are available at the Interagency Visitor Information Center in the town of Escalante. Always consult with a ranger at the Information Center for route information, trail and weather conditions, and other necessary information needed for a safe trip.

The following are just a few of the many hikes available in the Escalante wilderness. Happy trails!

HARRIS WASH

MAPS: USGS Silver Falls Bench and Red Breaks 7.5 minute quadrangles.

TRAILHEAD: Follow the Hole-in-the-Rock road south from Highway 12 about 10.5 miles to the signed junction, then 6.5 miles on a fair road to the signed trailhead and hiker registration box.

HIKING DISTANCE: From Harris Wash trailhead to the Escalante River - 10 miles (one way).

WATER AVAILABILITY: A perennial stream flows in Harris Wash. Generally, seeps and springs are of insufficient flow to provide usable quantities of water.

HIKING CONDITIONS: Harris Wash is an easy hike with no technical difficulties. The stream must be continually crossed or waded. Wear appropriate shoes.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Harris Wash offers an excellent opportunity to see a streamcourse develop from a broad, sandy wash to a deeply-entrenched canyon. A minimum of two days should be spent exploring Harris Wash. Begin the hike from the trailhead by walking downstream in the wash bottom. Do not cross the wash and continue on the road, for it leads only to an abandoned drill pad.

About 3.5 miles downstream, the creek passes through a narrow notch. To the north of the notch is an abandoned stream meander, known as a rincon, which was created when the stream cut through and straightened its course. To the south is a brushy side canyon which comes to a pouroff about one-third of a mile up.

Harris Wash continues its winding course 7 miles to the Escalante River. Two more side canyons enter the wash from the south, and, though brushy, can provide interesting exploring opportunities. As the canyon nears the Escalante River, high cliff walls soar, streaked with magnificent patterns of desert varnish. The lower three miles of Harris Wash exhibit the scale and grandeur typical of the canyons of the Escalante.

Once you reach the Escalante River, you can continue upstream about one-third mile to the stark, dry, extremely beautiful Silver Falls Creek, which enters from the east. You may wish to spend a day exploring this extraordinary canyon which derived its name from the great streaks of desert varnish which drape the canyon's walls. Silver Falls Creek is generally dry, so carry all the water you may need.

TWENTYFIVE MILE WASH

MAPS: USGS Sunset Flat and Egypt 7.5 minute quadrangles.

TRAILHEADS: 1. Twentyfive Mile Wash - Follow Hole-in-the-Rock road 16 miles to the signed Egypt road junction, then drive 3 miles on a good road to the signed parking area. There is no hiker registration box at this trailhead.

2. Egypt - Many visitors make a loop hike from Egypt trailhead to Fence Canyon, the Escalante River, Twentyfive Mile Wash, and back to Egypt trailhead. To reach Egypt trailhead, follow the Hole-in-the-Rock road 16 miles to the Egypt road junction and then 10 miles to the trailhead.

3. Early Weed Bench - Follow the Hole-in-the-Rock road 23 miles to the signed Early Weed Bench road, then drive 6 miles on a fair to poor road to the signed trailhead. Access to Twentyfive Mile Wash is by way of a tributary named Fox Canyon.

HIKING DISTANCES: From Twentyfive Mile Wash trailhead to the Escalante River - 14.2 miles (one way); Egypt trailhead to the mouth of Twentyfive Mile Wash via the Escalante River - 8.7 miles (one way); Early Weed Bench trailhead to the Escalante River via Fox Canyon - 7 miles (one way). At least two to three days should be spent exploring the wash.

WATER AVAILABILITY: Twentyfive Mile Wash contains a perennial stream (beginning 4 - 5 miles from the trailhead), but there are no usable seeps or springs. A stream with numerous pools flows in Fence Canyon. Fox Canyon provides a good water supply. Water from any pool or spring should be boiled or treated before drinking.

HIKING CONDITIONS: Twentyfive Mile Wash presents an easy hike with no technical difficulties. Wading shoes are needed for walking in the stream. The streambed tends to contain a considerable amount of clay, so the wash presents a somewhat “muckier” hike than other canyons, especially after high stream flows.

GENERAL INFORMATION: The hike from the Twentyfive Mile Wash trailhead begins by hiking down the dry wash and simply following the streambed.

The loop hike from Egypt trailhead entails descending an old stock trail down a fairly steep slickrock slope before descending into Fence Canyon and on to the Escalante River. The hike then continues 5.5 miles downriver to the mouth of Twentyfive Mile Wash where the route proceeds upstream to one of several possible exits from the canyon back to Egypt trailhead. Hikers interested in this loop hike may contact a ranger at the Interagency Visitor Information Center for more detailed route information and a free route guide.

The route from Early Weed Bench into Fox Canyon begins by heading in a northerly direction and descending off the bench. This route takes the hiker down over slickrock to a small tributary of Fox Canyon. (This will actually be the second tributary encountered. The first is easily crossed.) This second drainage can be crossed in only a few places, most of which are toward the upper end of the drainage. Once you have crossed the second drainage, follow the tributary toward Fox Canyon to the east, to a point between this tributary and the next short drainage into Fox Canyon downstream. This point provides the access route down into Fox Canyon and is composed of several short, steep slickrock pitches onto a silt bench. Please look for the well-used route off the upstream end of this bench and avoid contributing to erosion by creating a new path. It is now possible to follow Fox Canyon, which is fairly brushy, downstream to Twentyfive Mile Wash.

FENCE CANYON

MAP: USGS Egypt 7.5 minute quadrangle.

TRAILHEAD: Follow the Hole-in-the-Rock road south from Highway 12 about 16 miles to the signed Egypt road junction, then drive 10 miles on a fair road to the signed trailhead and hiker registration box.

HIKING DISTANCE: From Egypt trailhead to the Escalante River - 2.75 miles (one way).

WATER AVAILABILITY: A stream with numerous pools flows in Fence Canyon.

HIKING CONDITIONS: Hiking from Egypt trailhead to the river results in an elevation loss in excess of 1,000 feet. A steep slickrock slope is encountered initially; at other places, sandy areas must be traversed; the canyon bottom is quite brushy. Wading shoes are optional unless you are planning to hike up or down the Escalante River.





GENERAL INFORMATION: A beautiful panorama awaits you from the Egypt trailhead at the edge of Allen Dump Bench. You can see views of the Escalante country, the Henry Mountains, and Fence Canyon as it leads toward the Escalante River. Fence Canyon is primarily used as a route to the Escalante River and other canyons up- or downstream, but Fence Canyon itself presents an interesting day hike.

The hike begins at the edge of Allen Dump Bench and winds down to a steep slickrock slope. Near the top of the bench is a fairly obvious and well-used path switchbacking down to the slickrock. Please use the path and avoid shortcutting the switchbacks or creating new paths. A stock trail utilizing steps cut into the rock leads down the slickrock, but the trail is not always easy to find. It is possible to walk down the slickrock without using the trail, however.

Both Fence Canyon and its unnamed northern branch have impassable pouroffs at their upper ends. To descend into Fence Canyon, it is necessary, therefore, to skirt its northern rim and head toward the point at the confluence of the two canyons. The route follows an old stock trail which descends into the south branch of Fence Canyon near the point. Both branches of Fence Canyon present a beautiful and interesting hike.

SCORPION GULCH

MAPS: USGS Egypt and Scorpion Gulch 7.5 minute quadrangles.

TRAILHEAD: Follow the Hole-in-the-Rock road south from Highway 12 about 23 miles to the Early Weed Bench turnoff at Cat Pasture, then drive 6 miles on a fair to poor road to the end of the road at an old drill site. The hiker registration box is located about a half mile before the end of the road.

HIKING DISTANCE: From Early Weed Bench trailhead to the head of Scorpion Gulch - 5.5 miles (one way). From the head of Scorpion Gulch to the Escalante River - 3.3 miles (one way)

WATER AVAILABILITY: Water won't normally be found between the trailhead and the midpoint of Scorpion Gulch except after heavy rains. A few seeps and pools can be found in the lower half of Scorpion Gulch, and a small stream normally flows in the lower end.

HIKING CONDITIONS: This is a rather challenging hike requiring cross-country route-finding skills. There is a lengthy hike over slickrock and sand, a descent down a sand dune, and walking through soft sand and alluvial deposits. The lower half of Scorpion Gulch is an easier walk beside a small stream with no difficulties other than two boulder jams and a small pouroff, requiring some minor scrambling.

GENERAL INFORMATION: From the end of the road at the abandoned drill site, follow the remains of an old jeep trail about 1.5 miles until it turns to the south. At that point, continue east across a sandy, flat area. If you are near the preferred route, you will see a small arch to the south.

About a mile after leaving the jeep trail, you will descend from a small plateau down onto Scorpion Flat. The flat is comprised entirely of rolling slickrock with intermittent patches of sand. Before descending onto the flat, it is wise to locate Scorpion Gulch from a high point and take a compass bearing on the upper end of it. After making the descent, you will not see Scorpion Gulch again until you reach it. The approximate direction is east-southeast.

Access into Scorpion Gulch is by way of a sand dune on the north side of the canyon about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile downstream from the pouroff at the upper end. About three-fourths of a mile downstream is another sand dune which completely blocks the canyon. The downstream side of this dune is steep and easy to descend, but it is quite a struggle to get back up!



COYOTE GULCH - HURRICANE WASH

MAPS: USGS King Mesa and Stevens Canyon South 7.5 minute quadrangles.

TRAILHEADS: 1. Red Well - Follow the Hole-in-the-Rock road 30 miles to the signed junction, then drive 1.5 miles to the trailhead and hiker registration box. This trailhead provides access to upper Coyote Gulch.
2. Hurricane Wash - Follow the Hole-in-the-Rock road 33 miles to the parking area beside the road. The hiker registration box is located 0.2 mile down the wash.
3. Fortymile Ridge - Follow Hole-in-the-Rock road 35 miles to the signed junction, then drive 7 miles to the trailhead. The last two miles of this road is through deep sand and is not suitable for low-clearance vehicles.

HIKING DISTANCES: From Red Well trailhead to the Escalante River - 13 miles (one way); Hurricane Wash trailhead to the Escalante River - 12.3 miles (one way); Fortymile Ridge to Crack-in-the-Wall (access to lower Coyote Gulch or the Escalante River) - 2 miles (one way).

WATER AVAILABILITY: Coyote Gulch contains a number of seeps and springs in addition to a perennial stream. One particularly good spring flows from the canyon wall just downstream from Jacob Hamblin Arch.

HIKING CONDITIONS: The perennial stream in Coyote Gulch begins about one mile from the Red Well trailhead. The stream in Hurricane Wash begins about 3.5 miles from the trailhead. Wading shoes are a must.

The hike through Coyote Gulch is relatively easy, with two minor exceptions - a climb down a ledge near a waterfall and a steep descent down sandstone followed by a rather difficult climb down a second ledge. (Both of these are described in **GENERAL INFORMATION.**)

GENERAL INFORMATION: Coyote Gulch contains two arches, a natural bridge, and several waterfalls. It is easy to understand why this beautiful canyon is by far the most popular hiking destination of all the canyons of the Escalante. When hiking in Coyote Gulch in spring or fall, plan on encountering a number of other visitors.

A minimum of three days will be required to explore the length of Coyote Gulch. From Red Well or Hurricane trailhead, the canyon develops from wide, sandy washes to a narrow canyon with towering walls. Follow the wash downstream from either trailhead. Hurricane Wash joins Coyote Gulch about 5 miles from the Hurricane Wash trailhead.

The hike through the lush riparian zone of Coyote Gulch is relatively easy - except for those two exceptions. At the second waterfall below Cliff Arch, follow the ledge along the south wall to a place about 100 feet downstream where it is possible to scramble down off the ledges.

About 0.4 mile up Coyote Gulch from the Escalante River is an impenetrable boulder jam. To bypass this obstacle, follow the trail on the right-hand side of the stream across the lower portion of a sand slide and then traverse the fairly steep slickrock slope. (Stay low and near the edge.) The slickrock slope ends at a ledge about 5.5 feet high against which lean several small logs to assist hikers in climbing back up.

You can enjoy an outstanding view from the canyon rim by hiking from Fortymile Ridge to Crack-in-the-Wall. After scrambling down through the crack - a narrow route between the cliff face and huge rock slabs which have peeled off the cliff - a trail leads down a steep sand dune to lower Coyote Gulch. It is great to hike down the dune, but it is definitely strenuous hiking back up! The elevation difference is about 700 feet.

FIFTYMILE CREEK

MAPS: Sooner Bench and Davis Gulch 7.5 minute quadrangles.

TRAILHEADS: 1. Cave Point - This aptly-named projection from Fiftymile Bench is the landmark for this unsigned access route. Follow Hole-in-the-Rock road approximately 47.5 miles. Here, the road dips into a small draw, recognizable by a lightly-defined road heading west toward Cave Point. Park at this draw and walk east down the draw, a tributary which joins Fiftymile Creek 2.1 miles downstream.

2. The Soda - Follow Hole-in-the-Rock road approximately 49.3 miles to a sign which identifies a spring near the road. Back up a short distance and park in the parking area above the cattle watering tank. Walk past the tank and down the draw, another tributary which joins Fiftymile Creek 1.75 miles downstream.

HIKING DISTANCES: From Cave Point trailhead to Lake Powell - 5.2 miles (one way); The Soda trailhead to Lake Powell - 5.5 miles (one way).

WATER AVAILABILITY: A small stream begins about 2.5 - 3 miles downstream from the trailheads in Fiftymile Creek. There are no usable seeps or springs.

HIKING CONDITIONS: There are no technical difficulties on this hike. A short section of narrows about ½ mile upstream from Lake Powell requires wading, so wading shoes are recommended.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Hikers starting from the Cave Point trailhead will encounter a pouroff about mile down the channel from the road. This obstacle is easily circumvented by backtracking a short distance and exiting the stream channel on the north side. Parallel the channel and drop back down to the streambed once you are past the pouroff. Other than this one pouroff, there are no other obstacles on either route.

About mile beyond the confluence of the two major tributaries, the small stream of water appears. A short distance farther is an alcove-type arch on the north rim high above the streambed.

Entering from the north about 2.25 miles from the confluence of the two tributaries is a side canyon well worth exploring. This short tributary progressively narrows to a point where some interesting chimneying (a rock climbing technique) possibilities are available to those who are so inclined. If you have a Davis Gulch quadrangle, notice how this side canyon lies along a northwest-southeast joint which has created similar side canyons in Willow Gulch to the north and Davis Gulch and Clear Creek to the south.

Downstream from this tributary is the short narrows section where wading will be required. You can continue down the canyon for some distance beyond the narrows, depending on the current level of Lake Powell.



DAVIS GULCH

MAP: USGS Davis Gulch 7.5 minute quadrangle.

TRAILHEAD: Follow the Hole-in-the-Rock road approximately 50.5 miles to the crossing of upper Fiftymile Creek. Continue about one-tenth of a mile beyond the crossing to an unmarked flat area on the south side of the road. From this point, the unmarked cross-country route heads north-northeast, paralleling Fiftymile Creek for about ½ mile, then northeast to an old stock trail which descends into lower Davis Gulch.

HIKING DISTANCE: From the trailhead to the stock trail - 3.5 to 4 miles (one way); stock trail to Lake Powell - ¼+ mile (one way); Lake Powell to pouroff in upper Davis Gulch - 3.5 miles (one way).

WATER AVAILABILITY: A small stream begins just upstream from Benment Arch. There are no usable seeps or springs. Pocket water and plunge pools are seasonal.

HIKING CONDITIONS: The approach route to the stock trail is over sand and slickrock. The stock trail route into Davis Gulch does not present any problems. The route from the stock trail to Benment Arch is quite brushy, and there are a number of beaver ponds which must be waded through or circumvented. Upstream from Benment Arch, the route is sandy, without dense brush.



HAPPY JOURNEYS

GENERAL INFORMATION: When hiking from the Fiftymile Point area, stay close to Fiftymile Creek for the first ½ mile, then stay somewhat to the west of Davis Gulch and hike parallel to it until you reach the stock trail area. Getting too close to the rim of Davis Gulch results in much more up and down walking over rolling slickrock, especially near the upper end of the gulch. A small slot canyon tributary, difficult to cross, will also be encountered about a mile north of the road - if you are too close to the rim.

About 3.5 - 4 miles from the road, observe the small plateau on the opposite side of Davis Gulch. A notch in the plateau's side near the top is a landmark for finding the stock trail. (A much larger notch can also be seen downstream in Davis Gulch. This larger notch is about ¼ mile downstream of the stock trail.) When you are directly opposite the first notch, head toward the canyon rim to find a bowl-shaped depression. The stock trail may not be readily apparent, but you can find it if you explore around a bit.

From the bottom of the stock trail, the hike downstream to Lake Powell or upstream to the pouroff is straightforward. Please follow established trails where possible, and avoid starting new ones, especially near the lower end of the gulch.

An alternate entrance into Davis Gulch is a challenging scramble down through the narrows at the upper end. This involves chimneying down past several chockstones and pouroffs. Much of the route is very difficult. One long slickrock chute ends in a dropoff into a pool and cannot be climbed back up unless a rope is left in place. Other pools may be deep enough to require swimming, or they may be dry, depending on recent weather. If this route is taken, it is best to continue on down the canyon and return by way of the stock trail and across the bench.

MOODY CREEK

MAPS: USGS Scorpion Gulch 7.5 minute quadrangle.

TRAILHEAD: From Boulder, Utah, follow the Burr Trail road east 19 miles to the signed Petrified Wood Area access road. Drive south on this road 20 miles to the Moody Creek road. (You can also follow the Burr Trail road 33 miles east to the Moody Creek road. Both roads eventually meet and continue south into Moody Creek.) The road descends into the dry wash of Main Moody Creek Canyon and follows it for about 3 miles.

About 3 miles east of Main Moody Creek Canyon, just west of Purple Hills, is a fork. The right fork leads south into Middle Moody Creek. The road is generally passable for four-wheel drive vehicles with high clearance. (Road conditions vary and are subject to the weather!) The road is passable for about 2 miles. Park at this point. (The last mile before the wash crossing is in poor condition and is closed to vehicles anyway.)

HIKING DISTANCES: From the parking area to the Escalante River (via Middle Moody Creek) - 6 miles (one way).

WATER AVAILABILITY: Water may sometimes be found in Middle and East Moody Canyons, but it is best not to count on it. A fairly dependable trickle of water flows intermittently in the lower mile of East Moody Canyon.

HIKING CONDITIONS: The hike down Moody Creek is scenic and moderately strenuous, without technical difficulties.

GENERAL INFORMATION: From your vehicle, follow the road one mile to the wash, enter the wash, and proceed downstream. Middle Moody Canyon is quite broad and open and has many colorful Chinle formations topped by cliffs of Wingate sandstone. Walking is easy, as it is throughout most of this hike. The canyon gradually narrows; the Chinle formation diminishes, and the Wingate cliffs become dominant by the time you reach Main Moody Canyon.

Follow Main Moody Canyon downstream to the Escalante River. You can retrace your steps, or you can make a loop hike by walking down the Escalante River 1.5 miles to East Moody Canyon. Ascend the canyon and take the north branch. Continue up the north branch to the next fork. Take the right fork, but instead of following the bottom of the canyon, climb the ridge between the two canyons and follow the remains of an old uranium exploration road. This is a continuation of the road from the Purple Hills to Middle Moody Canyon. It leads out of the north branch of East Moody Canyon through a saddle and down into Middle Moody Canyon.

Views from the saddle include extensive, richly-colored exposures of the Chinle formation and an expansive view to the north of the upper reaches of Middle Moody Canyon, the Circle Cliffs, and Deer Point. Below the saddle on the north is the remains of an old uranium exploration camp. Follow the road down past the cabin and west along the south side of upper Middle Moody Canyon. The road follows the south side of this inner canyon until the canyon ends and can be crossed. You can walk back up the road to your vehicle.

SILVER FALLS CREEK

MAP: Silver Falls Bench 7.5 minute quadrangle.

TRAILHEADS: 1. From Boulder, Utah, follow the Burr Trail road east 19 miles to the signed Petrified Wood Area access road. Drive south on this road 20 miles to the Moody Creek road. At this junction, turn right, then drive 2.7 miles. At this junction, turn right again onto the road which leads to upper Silver Falls Creek. This road is in fair condition but becomes progressively rougher as it nears the marked Glen Canyon NRA boundary. The road is closed beyond the boundary to vehicle traffic.

2. Most of those who hike in Silver Falls Creek reach the canyon by hiking down Harris Wash from its trailhead to the Escalante River, then proceeding upriver about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile before crossing the Escalante to enter Silver Falls Creek canyon.

HIKING DISTANCE: From the Glen Canyon NRA boundary to the Escalante River - 5.3 miles (one way).

WATER AVAILABILITY: A small, intermittent, and alkaline stream may be found in lower Silver Falls Creek, but it is not generally usable. Emigrant Spring, 2.8 miles from the river at the rear of a rincon, is reliable, but its water should be treated. Other seeps may be encountered but are unreliable or of insufficient flow.

HIKING CONDITIONS: Silver Falls Creek presents an easy hike with no technical difficulties. The intermittent stream may be encountered in the lower portion of the canyon, but wading shoes are not required.

GENERAL INFORMATION: Silver Falls Creek was named for the colorful streaks of desert varnish which drape the canyon walls. Silver Falls Creek, along with Harris Wash, was traversed by the Halls Crossing wagon road which led from Escalante to southeastern Utah. This road was used after the Hole-in-the-Rock road was abandoned, but it is now closed to vehicle traffic in the canyons. Watch for remnants of the old road as you hike.

Upper Silver Falls Creek has three wide branches. The road to the Glen Canyon NRA boundary follows the main branch. A little over a mile downstream from the boundary, the North Fork enters the main branch, and a mile up the North Fork from this confluence, the Dry Fork branches off.

As you continue down the main fork of Silver Falls Creek, you can see an interesting rincon on the north side of the canyon. The Emigrant Spring rincon is 1.1 miles farther downstream on the south side of the canyon.

From Emigrant Spring rincon downstream, the canyon narrows as the soft Chinle rock formation gradually becomes less exposed. The canyon does widen out somewhat again as it nears the river.

Approximately 1.5 miles upstream from the Escalante River is the George Hobbs inscription and memorial. During February, 1883, Hobbs was using this route to take supplies by horse and mule to Bluff, Utah, when he was stranded by a snowstorm. Believing that he would not survive, Hobbs pecked his name into the rock wall. After five days, he was able to resume his journey. Please do not add your own name, initials, or graffiti to this historical landmark.

NOTES

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As to when I shall visit civilization, it will not be soon... I prefer the saddle to the streetcar...the obscure and difficult trail, leading into the unknown, to any paved highway, and the deep peace of the wild to the discontent bred by cities.

- *Everett Ruess from his last letter to his brother Waldo, before disappearing into the canyons of the Escalante*



The canyons of the Escalante remain a special place - a bit of magic in a world grown too real. The need for places such as these, both for ourselves and for future generations, can become only more critical. Only by our efforts can we ensure that the wilderness left in the world is not diminished - or lost forever.