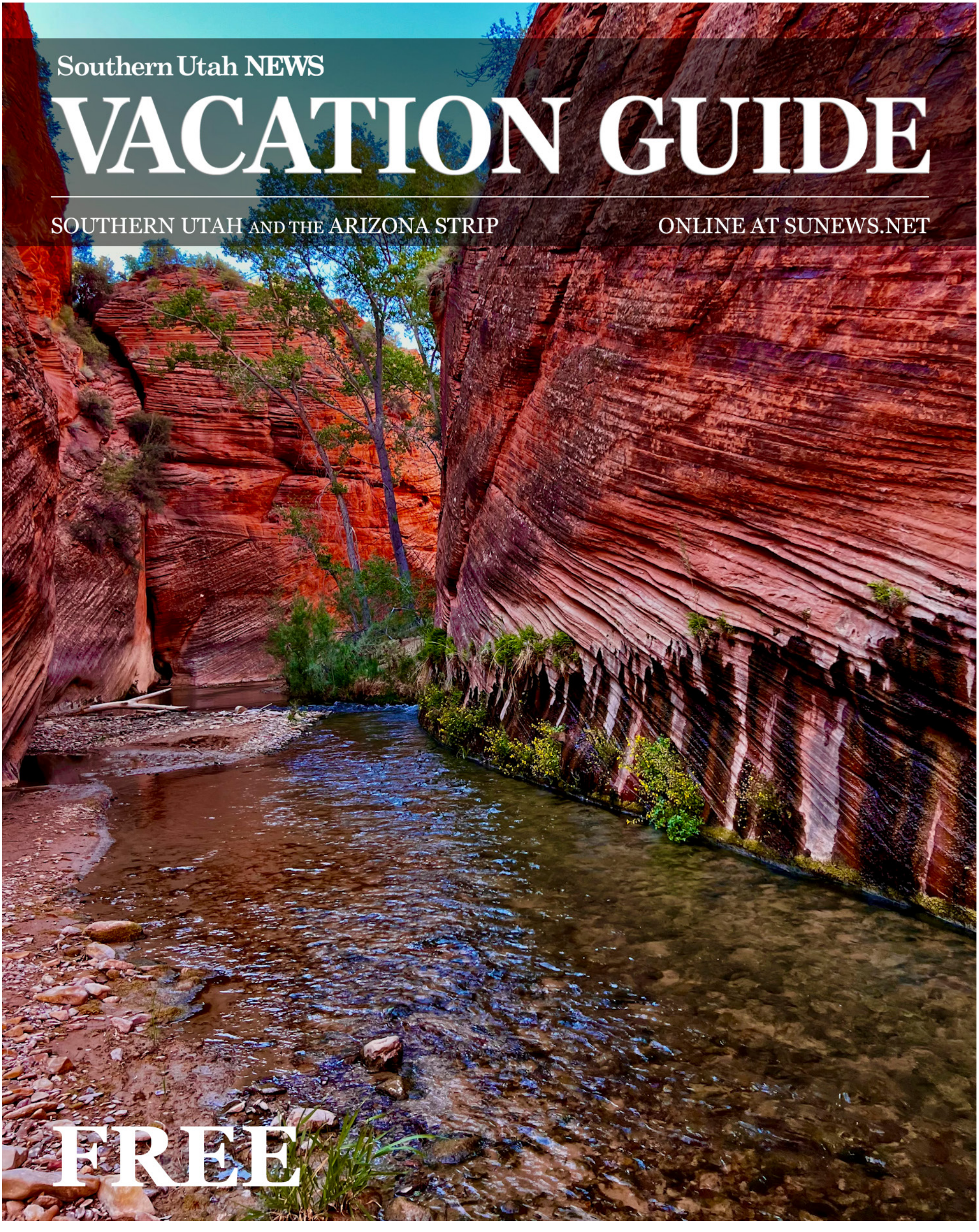
Southern Utah NEWS

VACATION GUIDE

SOUTHERN UTAH AND THE ARIZONA STRIP

ONLINE AT SUNEWS.NET



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About the front page photographer

Growing up, Weston Daley fell in love with the outdoors; hiking, fishing and pretty much anything under the sun. He currently works as a canyoneering and UTV guide here in southern Utah. As he fell more in love with the beautiful mountains, slot canyons and cliffside views, he also started to pick up photography; being out in nature, hiking in places very few get to see and those jaw dropping moments, he couldn't pass up taking a few pictures here and there. Soon, Weston found himself falling in love with photography as well. Profound beauty is difficult to capture, but Weston thoroughly enjoys trying! He loves sharing his photos and the stories that go along with them. Weston currently lives and plays in southern Utah, along with his wife, Ashley, and their two little ones, Peggy and Dakota. He is grateful for the beautiful life he has been blessed with, and hopes to continue to be able to share it with others for a long time to come.

2023
KANAB AREA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

- **15: Orderville town "Soup Town Days"** *A celebration of Orderville's heritage. Located at the North Even Center in Orderville from 2 - 5 p.m.*
- **26-29: Kanab Red Rock ATV Jamboree** *Endless riding opportunities on the Montezuma Trail System in beautiful Southern Utah. kanabatvjamboree.com*
- **27-30: Kanab Film Festival** *Located at the Redstone Theatre. Kanabfilmfest.com*

MAY

- **4-7: Kanab Sighthound Shivoo aka Greyhound Gathering** *Celebration and fundraising even for lovers of greyhounds and sight hound from around the world. Greyhoundgang.org*
- **5: Raven's Heart Gallery Two Featured Artists** *Gail Alger 6 p.m. & Cyrus Mejía 7 p.m. New artists featured every first Friday. Ravensheartgallery.com*
- **12-13:Ragnar Trail Zion** *Located at Zion Ponderosa Resort*
- **12: Comedian - Nick Hoff** *Located at the Kanab Center*
- **13: Kanab Mother's Day 10K** *Race from Moqui Cave to the Kanab Center, starting at 7 a.m.*
- **15: North Rim of the Grand Canyon Opens** *State Route 67 and all North Rim services will open for the season*

JUNE

- **7-10: WOW** *Women out West Professional Artists of Utah*
- **15-17: Jacob Hamblin Days** *Rodeo located at the Kaneplex Area*

JULY

- **4: Kanab Independence Day Celebration** *Join us for a Color Fun Run 5K, breakfast, parade, street fair, entertainment and fireworks. Visitsouthernutah.com/kanab-fourth*
- **24: Pioneer Day Celebration Fireworks** *Located at Jackson Flat Reservoir*

AUGUST

- **7-12: Kane County Fair** *Located in Orderville at the North Events Center. Thekanecountyfair.com*
- **24-26: Western Legends Roundup Heritage & Music Festival** *Celebrating the culture of the Old West. Street fair with art and food vendors, live music and entertainment. Westernlegendsroundup.com*

SEPTEMBER

- **1-2: Rutan Fly-in** *Pilots fly their Canard planes at Kanab City Airport*
- **22-23: Carmel Mountain Car Show** *Southern Utah's premier annual car show event held in beautiful Mount Carmel Junction, Utah*
- **Salt to Saint** *A cycling relay race over 24 hours & 420 miles from Salt Lake City to St. George. Salttosaint.com*
- **24-30: Grand-2-Grand Ultra Marathon** *7 day, 171 miles, self-supported foot race from the Grand Canyon North Rim to Grand Staircase. G2Gultra.com*

OCTOBER

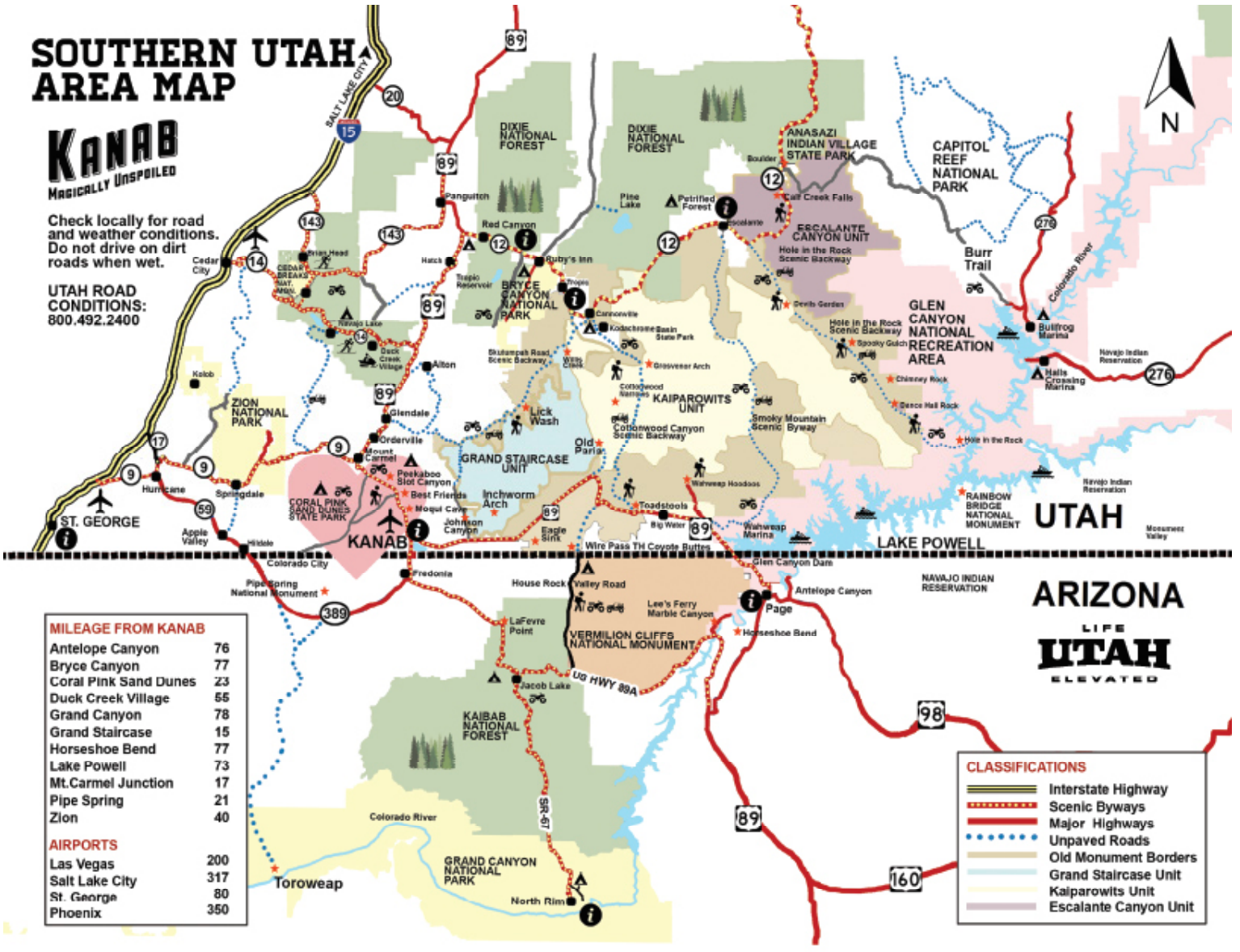
- **4-8: Grand Circle Trailfest**
- **13-14: Reel Deal Fishing Tournament** *Located at Jackson Flat Reservoir. Thereeldealfishingtournament.com*
- **13-14: Glendale Heritage and Apple Festival**
- **14: Over the Rainbow Runs** *10K and Half Marathon on the trails around Kanab - all proceeds go to the Kane County Children's Justice Center. Located at Jacob Hamblin Park at 9 a.m. overtherainbowruns.wordpress.com*
- **14: Red Rocktoberfest** *Art, music & food in downtown Kanab*
- **15: Grand Canyon North Rim closes**
- **20-21: Crafters Convention** *Located at the Kanab Center*

NOVEMBER

- **2-4: Writers Conference**
- **23: Turkey Trot 5K** *Located at Jackson Flat Reservoir*
- **Christmas Parade of Lights** *Located in downtown Kanab*
- **27-Dec. 1: Polar Express** *Depart on the hour for a fun filled ride to Santa's Farm.*

DECEMBER

- **2-3: Symphony of the Canyons Christmas Festival** *Annual dinner & concert by Symphony of the Canyons on Friday evening. Entertainment & vendor booth on Saturday at the Kanab Center*
- **15: Christmas Bird Count** *BLM sponsored citizen science experience counting winter migratory birds in the Kanab Count Circle. Audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count*



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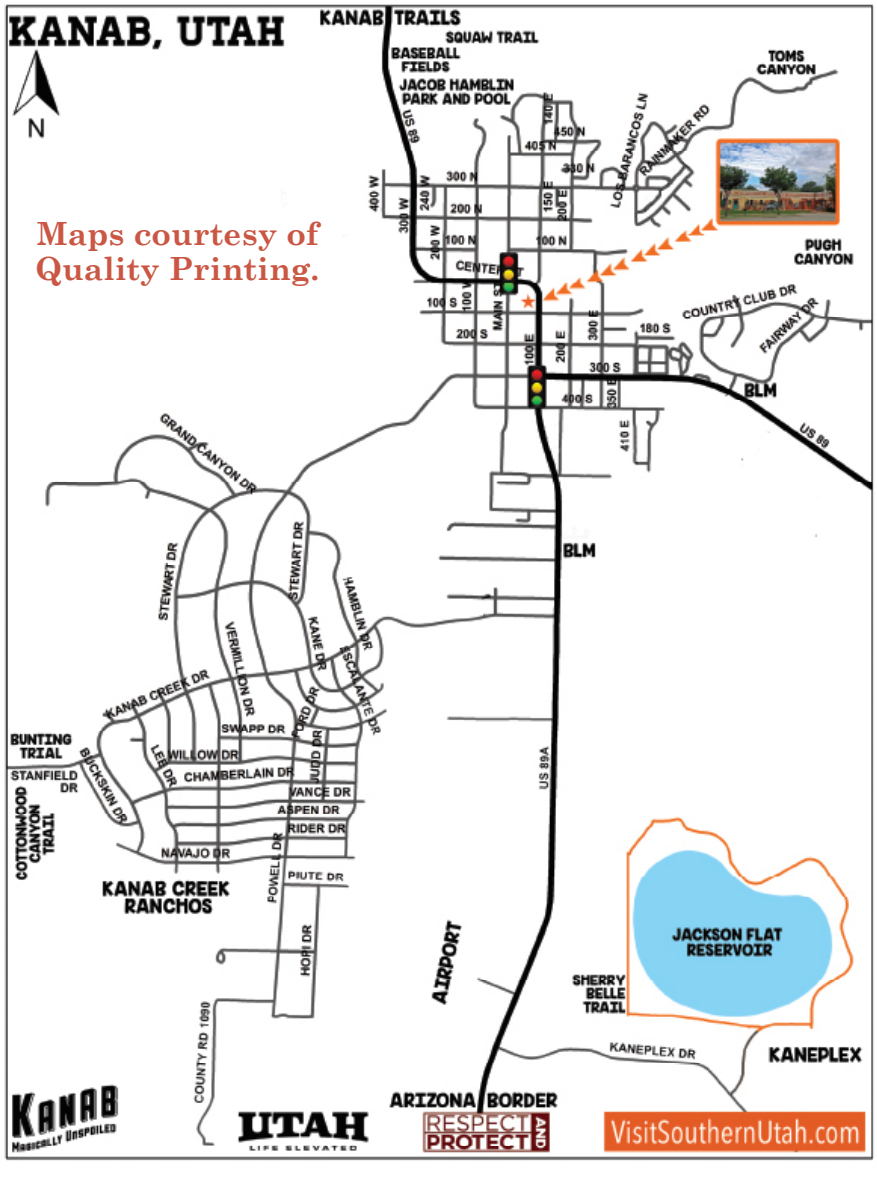

Historic downtown Kanab. Photo courtesy of Kanab Museum.

Nestled in the heart of southern Utah, Kanab is a charming city that boasts breathtaking landscapes, including the Vermilion Cliffs, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, and Zion National Park. The city's rich history spans thousands of years and can be seen in the incredible cliff dwellings and petroglyphs left behind by the Ancestral Puebloans who once made it their home. Adding to its cultural significance, the Kanab area is also part of the ancestral homelands of the Paiute people. By the mid-1800s, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints settled the area, bringing about a wave of changes that led to the rise of industry and, eventually, tourism. Throughout its history, Kanab has welcomed people from different communities and cultures, with the red cliffs shaping and enriching their lives. Don't miss out on the magic of Kanab - come and experience it for yourself!

KANAB MUSEUM

WELCOME TO SOUTHERN UTAH - LET US BE YOUR GUIDE

By Ty Gant

Odds are if you're reading this guide you're doing so in or near Kanab, Utah, the capital of Kane County. Kanab has a long and storied history hosting guests from around the world, starting with its legacy as a location for classic cowboy films and growing as a tourist destination from there. As such, the town has evolved as a place well suited for visiting, with a healthy hospitality industry and plenty of options for places to stay, places to eat and, of course, many places to visit - the town is within close proximity to four different national parks and countless scenic locations and hikes.

So where to begin? The following is a simple list of locations to visit in no particular order other than being categorized as "in Kanab," "within quick visiting distance of Kanab," and "plan a whole day to visit;" look them over and see if any catch your eye.

In Kanab - try any of the local restaurants. All of the following are founded, owned and operated by locals: Big Al's for burgers, fried chicken and shakes; Jakey Leigh's, Kanab Creek Bakery or Sunny Creek Cafe for breakfast and coffee; Escobar's for Mexican; Havana Cabana for Cuban; Houston's Trail's End or Iron Horse for steakhouse classics; Wild Thyme for locally sourced bistro; or Sego for gourmet Americana.

For historical and cultural sites, Kanab visitors can check out the Heritage House for the founding history of the town; Parry Lodge, Little Hollywood Museum and the Crescent Moon Theater hearken to the town's cowboy filmmaking legacy; and the Kanab Visitor's Center, along the town's main road, can provide information on local trails and hikes, of which there are many within walking distance of the local places to stay - look for the buffalo made of film reel, that's the spot to inquire! Kanab's hikes are probably its biggest appeal, and there are trails aplenty.

Close visiting distance to Kanab - just north of the town is the Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, the largest no-kill animal sanctuary in the world - the sanctuary has guided tours, animal visits, and places to eat as well. Just a bit further north is the Moqui Cave, a museum collection by a local paleontologist and geologist, with relics and artifacts from local Indigenous cultures on display as well. There are sand caves nearby Moqui Cave that show off the beautiful sandstone formation in the area, with walking access for anyone able to make a little bit of a climb.

Many of the incredible hikes and climbs in the area fall under this category, with places like Belly of the Dragon and Peekaboo Slot Canyon within easy visiting distance. Be sure to double check at the visitor's center to find a hike that suits your party's - and just as importantly, your vehicle's - capabilities. If you're unsure if you can make it to a specific location, there are multiple guiding companies in the area with equipment and expertise to get you wherever you want to go. The last location in this category could almost land in the next one, but its proximity to Kanab probably means it fits just as well here: the Coral Pink Sand Dunes. The Sand Dunes are a gorgeous vista showcasing the landscapes of the area dyed red and pink by rich iron, perfect for photography, ATVing and sandboarding; lots to do, but generally - especially in the summertime - you won't want to spend all day in the area. Bring lots of water!

Plan a day to visit - on to the heavy hitters! Any one of these locations likely require a day or more for the full experience of visiting, both due to travel time and depth of the location. Be warned - visit any one of these sites and you won't want to leave.

The Grand Canyon: Most people - myself included - don't quite understand how appropriate the naming of the Grand Canyon is until they get there to see it. The vastness of the canyon, the colors painting the walls, the variety of tributaries and offshoot canyons and the majesty of the Colorado River are almost unmatched anywhere in the world. With this size and variety in mind, there's a reason the Grand Canyon has lodges for overnight stay - there's plenty to do out here, from hikes to restaurants to drive-up view spots. The Grand Canyon National Park system has multiple visitor's guides; the National Park Service (NPS) has a surprisingly helpful phone application if you're looking to plan ahead!

Zion Canyon: If you want to sound like a local, pronounce it "Z-eye-in" to rhyme with "ion" and people will believe you know what you're talking about. Zion Canyon has broken records for visitation year after year, and with good reason - it is the ultimate red rock southern Utah formation, the defining experience for a visit to the area. Some of Zion's best spots are hikes, so be prepared for a little bit of walking - get water, food and trail maps from the visitor's center or download them to a device. Be warned, however - the deep trails and far remote heights mean you won't always have digital service in places, so don't rely on navigation apps too heavily! With all that said, don't be too

Your one stop to shop...at the stoplight in Kanab!

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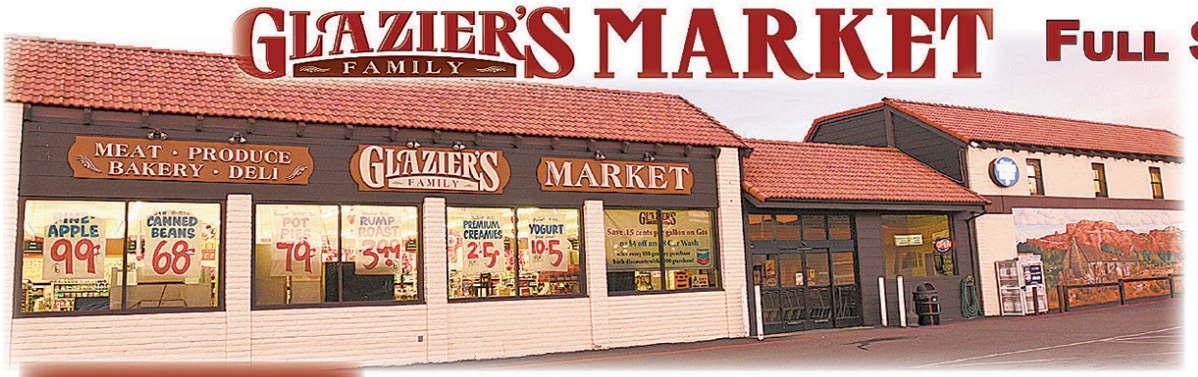

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discouraged if you're not in condition to go hiking - at least one highlight experience can be found in the simple drive through the canyon. I have had many visitors tell me that one of the best parts of coming to the Zion area is the moment you emerge from one of the cliffside tunnels to see the park.

Bryce Canyon: Visitors to our area often come expecting stark, dry desert - for many parts of Kane County and southern Utah/northern Arizona, that is true. However, what many folks find surprising is the difference between a low altitude desert, like the ones you see in cowboy movies, and a *high* altitude desert, like places you'll find in our area here. Bryce Canyon is a sterling example of this high altitude biome - beautiful, sturdy evergreens atop red and pink plateaus, winding shapes carved into the canyon walls by snowmelt and staggeringly beautiful nighttime vistas characterize this gorgeous area. I certainly mean that last one - one of the best times to visit Bryce is at *night*, and if you have the leeway to plan around it, during the darker phases of the moon (aim for the week leading up to the new moon and you won't regret it.) The rural areas around southern Utah and northern Arizona provide some of the lowest light pollution in the world, and on a cloudless night you can find some of the best stargazing opportunities anywhere. Bryce Canyon is a phenomenal place to see the stars and other stellar phenomena.

Lake Powell and Page: If you're staying in Page, Arizona, this is probably why. Lake Powell is a massive artificial lake created by the Glen Canyon dam, and it functions as one of the most important resources to our area - as both a water storage reservoir and as a source of hydro-electric power running through the dam. It also happens to be a massive lake located within a gorgeous canyon connected to three beautiful rivers. Recreation opportunities abound, from boating and kayaking, to visiting the top of the dam for photo ops and education. Page, similar to the description of Kanab, has evolved as it has become a more and more popular tourist destination - which means good food and historical sites aplenty! (My personal favorite spot to eat is Bird House, give it a try if you like chicken and craft beer.) Lake Powell will require a bit of planning, especially in hotter and busier months, and *especially* if you have a big boat to work around. If you plan your trip well, you'll find days and days worth of adventure on the lake.

So, there you have it - a quick rundown to hopefully get the gears turning on where you might have the best time during your visit! As always, the visitor's services in any of these areas stand by to answer questions and to help you enjoy and stay safe as you explore the area. The content in this guide is dedicated to the same goal, so enjoy the read, and enjoy your visit!

Photo by Sunny Stroeer.

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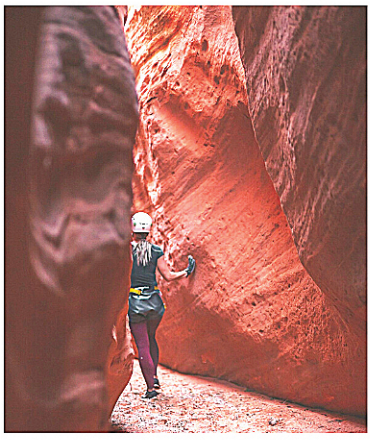

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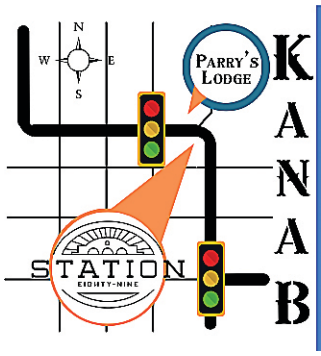

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A VISIT TO CORAL PINK SAND DUNES

By Ty Gant

Proving that playing in the sand isn't just fun for kids, the Coral Pink Sand Dunes are a must-see for any visitor to the southern Utah area. The Coral Pinks are 3,700 acres of State Park land, formed by wind erosion of the iron-rich red rocks in the region - it turns out, when you dilute bright red with soft white sand, you get pink. Who would've thought?

The Sand Dunes make for some beautiful exploration and recreation. Some of the favorite pastimes for visitors are four-wheeling, sandboarding down the slopes or just hiking through the rolling dunes. There are miles and miles of trails and ATV roads on the BLM lands surrounding the park, and there are ATV companies that will rent you vehicles in the area; however, if you want to hike the dunes themselves, you'll be doing it the old fashioned way. The sand is so soft that footpaths just sort of disappear in the wind, and we prefer it that way, since every time the wind whips up the Dunes reset to a natural and untouched beauty.

The Coral Pink Sand Dunes were so lovely and unique in this part of the world that they even had the chance to tie in to nearby Kanab's "Little Hollywood" filmmaking culture; multiple films have used the scenery to depict various desert settings from around the world - and beyond, considering Martian setting of *John Carter*! Most of these films featured local actors, extras and trained animals, so the Kane County area, where the dunes are located, has a major fondness for old movie landmarks. With the sort of natural beauty that's worth making movies over, the Coral Pink Sand Dunes are a beloved local landmark, and some of the greatest fun you can have within a day's drive of Mt. Carmel, Orderville and Kanab.

The park is equipped for visitors, with a campsite, running water - including a shower house - and sewage disposal. The site is busy, so make reservations early if you want to camp on the actual park grounds. However, the Dunes are easily accessible with a drive of less than an hour from nearby Kanab, so anyone making Kanab their travel HQ can make a trip without much concern. There are paved roads the whole way, so no need for big four-wheel drives or ATVs to get to the best access points for the Dunes.

For all their beauty and mystique, the Sand Dunes - like any desert destination in the hot and unpredictable weather of southern Utah and northern Arizona - require a little bit of prep for anyone planning a hike or ATVing. Be sure to bring plenty of water, sunscreen and good hiking snacks, preferably something to boost your salt intake if you're sweating. With that in mind, the Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park has a visitor's center with a great view of the Dunes very near a place to park a car, so don't lose hope if you're not up to hiking a literal desert. You can still see some of the Dunes' most lovely sites (and photo opportunities) with just a short walk from your car.

Nearby locations worth visiting while you're here are the South Fork Petroglyphs northeast and the dinosaur track site a short drive off the park - you may need a four-wheel drive vehicle for the latter. Keep an eye open for various other sites and sights if you crest particularly high vantage points in the park; the Sand Dunes are close enough to see parts of Zion, the Grand Canyon and other local landmarks like Kanab Canyon. The State Park Visitor's Center can provide information for those sorts of sites, and the Park Services have online resources as well. Consider checking out the Utah State Park and the National Park Services' respective iOS and Android applications for convenient info.

Take a hike, see the sights, ride an ATV, sled down the slopes, role-play a desert nomad in a caravan train, whatever you're into; the Sand Dunes are an experience not to be missed.

Photo by Jill Williams.

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ABOUT US

We started Coral Cliffs Tours & Townhomes of Kanab because we, along with our guides, love sharing this amazing area with people from all over the world! We have seven children and wanted to make touring the area as affordable as possible for families and other travelers who may be on a bit of a budget. We began catering to our vacation rental guests, but soon decided to extend our discounted rates to everyone! We love what we do and hope to meet you soon!
-Jeff & Julie

2023 PRICING GRID
(PRIVATE JEEP TOURS)

Group size	2-3 hrs	4-6 hrs	7-8 hrs	9-12 hrs
1-2 people	$170	$270	$345	$495
3 people	$215	$310	$415	$575
4 people	$250	$350	$490	$650
5 people	$300	$400	$575	$725
6 people	$350	$450	$650	$800
Additional people	$50 per person	$50 per person	$75 per person	$75 per person

*All tours are subject to %15 taxes and fees.
*Prices subject to change. Check website for current rates.
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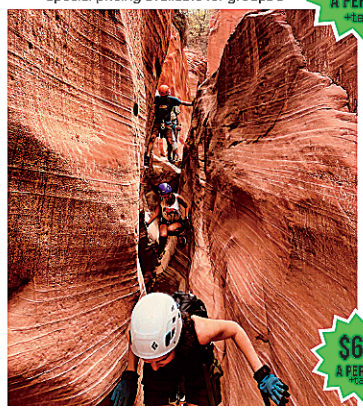

PEEKABOO & GREAT CHAMBER
*prices are for small GROUP tours 3-10 people, see 4-6 hour pricing grid for private combo tour cost or 2-3 hour for just one of these sites
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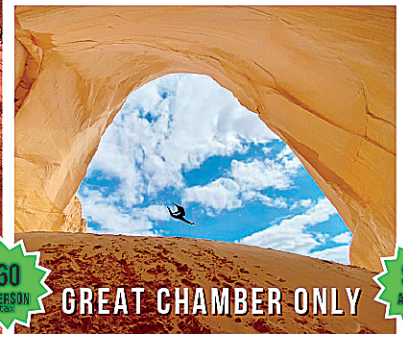

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SEEING THE GRAND CANYON FROM THE NORTH

By Ty Gant

One of the literal Seven Natural Wonders of the World is titled "Grand" with good reason. The beauty of the Grand Canyon is nothing short of staggering, and entire vacations could be dedicated to exploring the vast reaches and vistas that may as well have been colored and composed by a master artist. There's a quiet wonder to the Grand Canyon that is simply unmatched.

As the Canyon runs east-to-west lengthwise, it can be seen from the high vantage points of the northern or southern rims - most visitors reading this guide will have easier access to the North Rim than the South, and to their advantage too. The South Rim is the more popular of the two spots, being closer to big urban centers like Flagstaff, Ariz., and "popular" also means "busy," especially in the height of vacation seasons. The North Rim is indisputably the quieter, more private way to experience the Grand Canyon, trading fewer amenities - though there are still excellent amenities - for breathing room and chances to take trails and viewpoints all to yourself.

The journey to the Canyon is an experience all its own - be sure to stop at Jacob's Lake for their renowned restaurant and fresh-baked cookies! The North Rim is accessed through some of the greenest forests Utah and Arizona have to offer, with the cool, high altitude encouraging impressive evergreens and all sorts of unique wildlife to flourish in the area. The road takes you up a gentle incline, around the curves of the mountain terrain and along the great Kaibab Plateau, ultimately ending in one of the most dramatic and awe-inspiring sights on this earth. The thick forests and rolling terrain stay close to the road, meaning the Canyon can, in a way, sneak up on you - you're driving along, enjoying the trees and the flowers, and then *boom* - in an instant, you've rounded a corner and the entire horizon is unfolding in front of you. Welcome to the Grand Canyon.

Once you're there, there are a thousand ways to enjoy the Canyon. For the casual visitor, there are vistas and gorgeous photo ops just a short walk away from vehicle access, along with multiple eateries in the main visitor's lodge, which is also equipped with places to stay if you can find a reservation - if not, there are also campgrounds dotting the park site.

If you're feeling brave enough, look down. Photo by Jill Williams.

The restaurants in the North Rim's Lodge provide excellent views of the Canyon, all from the comfort and ease of the indoors, so visitors who lack the means to take long hikes will still have plenty of ways to enjoy.

On the other hand, for those who *do* like a bit of rugged hiking, there's no place better than the North Rim. Miles and miles of well-maintained

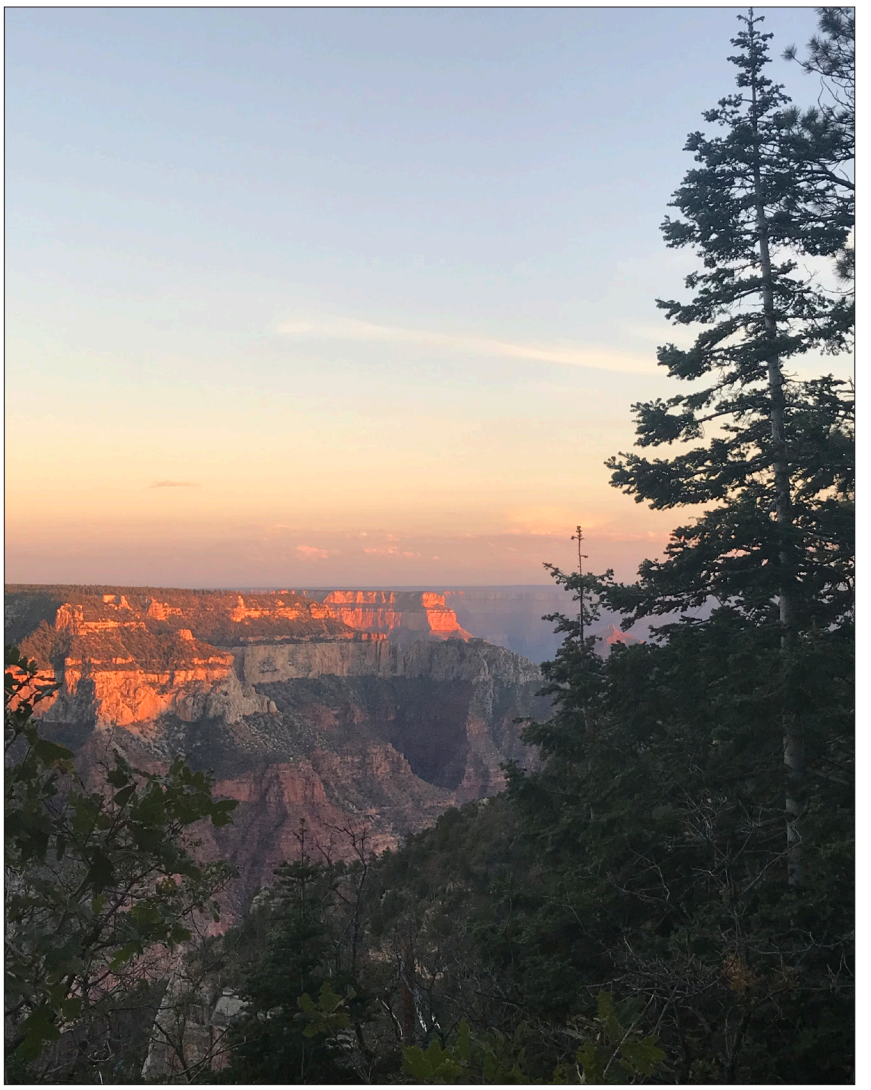
hiking trails to some of the most gorgeous vistas in the world are accessible from multiple points across the park - and, again, if you time your hike right you can take the entire route from green forested base, to soaring heights of the peak without seeing another hiker. If you're lucky, the right time of year, route and time of day might just get you a personal, one-on-one experience with this wonder of the world. The Visitor's Lodge has plenty of info for you, as does the National Park Services (NPS) phone app. Just remember that due to sheer walls and sudden altitude changes, you won't always have cell service or data, so sometimes a good old fashioned paper map is the most reliable option - or at least something downloaded on a device with a good battery pack.

Stay safe as you hike the lovely Grand Canyon. Keep in mind that it can reach altitudes of over 9,000 feet! That carries travel implications: the body dehydrates faster at high altitudes, and people who are used to lower altitudes often experience shortness of breath in the thinner air. If you're used to hiking in low altitudes, expect your stamina to run out a little quicker - pace yourself, and bring plenty of water!

Most of the hikes on the North Rim stay at high altitudes and keep to the upper reaches of the Grand Canyon, but there are NPS managed trails that take travelers down the canyon walls to the roaring Colorado River that carved the canyon in the first place. These are pretty demanding hikes, not for the inexperienced or the faint of heart - and they are multiple day adventures. If you can swing it, it will give you a true appreciation for the vastness and majesty of the Grand Canyon itself, and the Colorado that created it. Check the same services mentioned above for the availability of guides and travel groups.

It's worth mentioning that the Grand Canyon is included in the National Parks Pass, like nearby Bryce and Zion; if you pay for entry to one, you can pick up the pass that gives you access to all of them. We did the math - as of early 2023, if you're planning on visiting at least two of the three above-mentioned sites the pass will save you money.

If you are lucky enough to have a chance to visit the Grand Canyon, you're guaranteed an experience like no other. The quiet wonder of the largest canyon in the world is sure to impress, and to give a sense of the greatness and awe that will crown your vacation to this area as a highlight.



Right: Clean air, evergreen trees and sedimentary vistas make the Grand Canyon a stunning sight. Photo by Katie Wallace.

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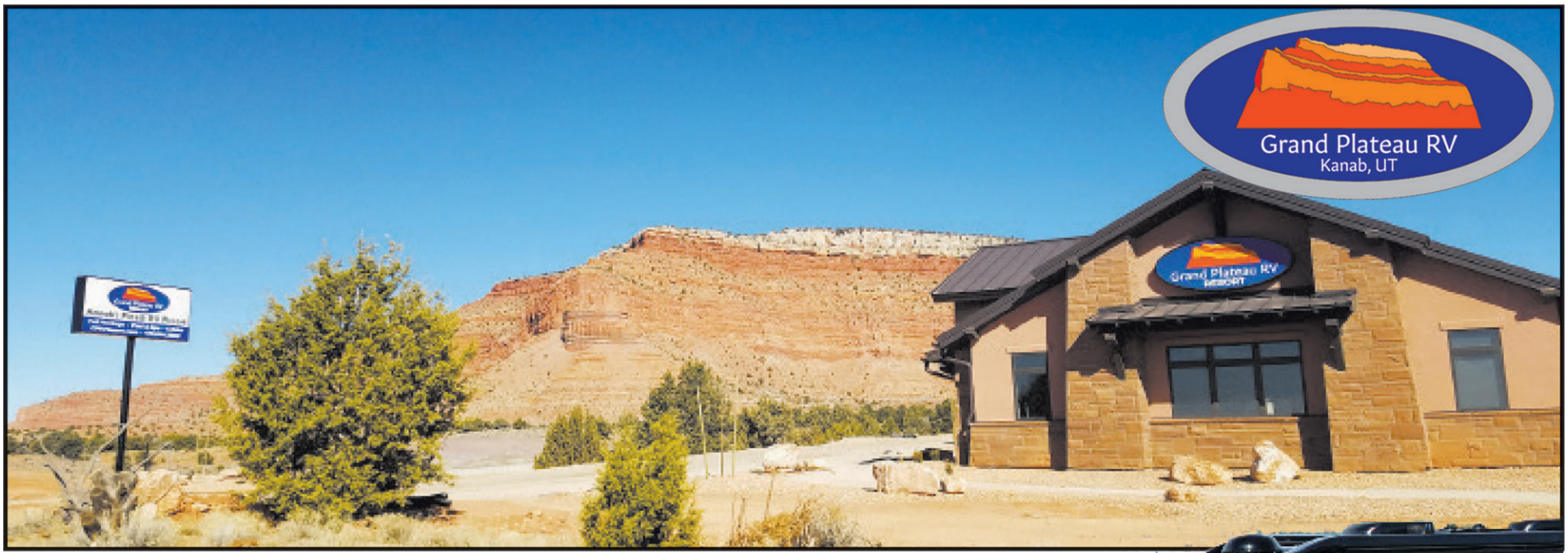

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SMALL TOWN - BIG CELEBRATION

By Neal Brown

The Fourth of July represents what is truly great about America, and that's never truer than spending the holiday in a small town like Kanab, Utah. It's fun to see the streets lined with friends and family, tourists and transients. Whether you recognize someone or not, it feels like they are connected to you, and after sharing an Independence Day in Kanab, you are connected. There's a bond shared through the celebration of freedom and the safety that we all enjoy walking the streets during the parade, getting candy thrown at us, getting water sprayed on you and smiling through it all in the dry desert heat. While the parade may seem short compared to big city parades, the after-parade activities abound.

Jacob Hamblin Park, just a few blocks north of Main Street, shines bright as one of the best parks in southern Utah. Tucked under the rising red plateaus, it provides the perfect backdrop for a fireworks show like nothing you've ever experienced before. It's no wonder the grassy park fills up right before dusk as the residents claim their spot for the fantastic fireworks show.

Visitors from all over the world come to Jacob Hamblin Park to take a load off, unwind and hit refresh, whether it's for a quick picnic lunch, or a day of getting rejuvenated before they're off on their next adventure. I have talked to many such people, who are astounded at the beauty and the activities that the park has to offer. One woman from Sweden told me they didn't have anything like this where she lived. She couldn't believe the playground structure, the splash pad feature and the enticing outdoor swimming pool right next door to the park.

The new skate park stays full all day as kids take in the last bit of sunlight before the sun goes down and the Fourth of July show begins. It's not uncommon to have kids from all over southern Utah, including Cedar City, St. George and Mesquite, Nevada, travel to spend the day skating the unique pump track around the skate park. It feels different, and that's because it is.

It's hard to put your finger on exactly why Kanab has that different feel to it. When you start engaging with the locals, you'll start to understand what makes Kanab the unique place it is. It's the people that make Kanab what it is, and the diversity among the community is ever present. Whether it's talking to Barry Glazier at Glazier's Market, Victor Cooper at Rocking V Cafe, Chef Shon at Sego Restaurant or Rosa at Escobar's Mexican Restaurant, the love for Kanab radiates off all of them. As you feel that love, and build connections with one another, you'll get hooked on what makes Kanab so great: the people. It's refreshing to feel it, and it's addicting, which is why most people you see at the Fourth of July parade in Kanab, are repeat offenders, and we hope you'll become one, too.

Kanab welcomes you to be our guest as you spend whatever time you have in our neck of the woods. We hope you enjoy it and treat it as well as we try to treat it.

Fireworks in Kanab are a highlight of the Fourth of July. Photo by Raven Chavez.

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From the Ancestral Puebloans to the early Settlers and on through the golden age of film-making, Kanab has been making it's place in history. The Kanab Museum is home to thousands of artifacts and archives that serve to educate and engage all that visit. So whether you stay a few minuets or a few hours, we hope you have an experience you will never forget!

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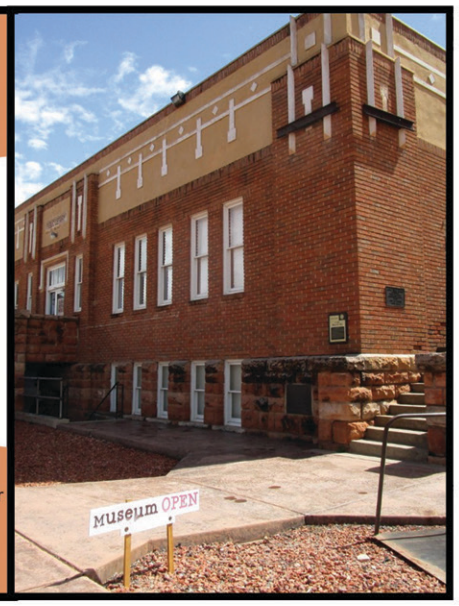
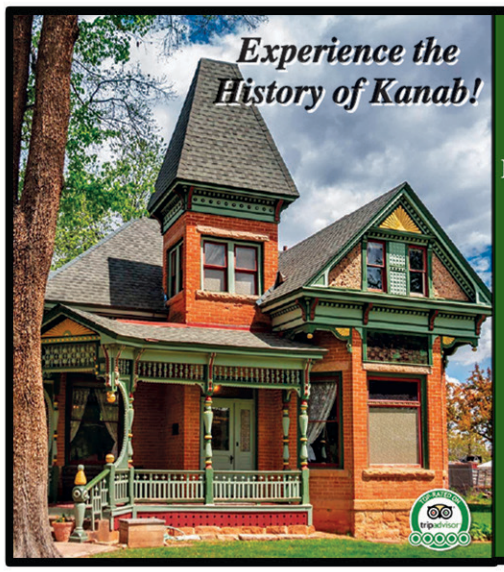
Hours of operation are seasonal, so please check our website for more information.

www.kanabmuseum.org





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WE INVITE YOU TO ZION NATIONAL PARK

By Ty Gant

I am of the opinion that the triad of Zion, Bryce and the Coral Pinks collectively embody the beautiful biomes of southern Utah. Bryce represents high altitude mountainous reaches and soaring vistas; the Sand Dunes display rugged desert that shows beauty in simplicity; and finally, we have Zion, the ultimate display of ancient sandstone slots and rills resulting in layered mountains awash in sunset colors. From the checkerboard cliffs to the solemn plateaus, the rock formations of Zion Canyon are so fascinatingly precise, aesthetic and eye-catching it's almost hard to believe they formed naturally - but indeed, the whole canyon is a result of wind and water carving the land in unique ways. The natural forces that created Zion produced world class views that attract visitors from around the globe in ever increasing numbers.

There's a reason this particular canyon is named for the scriptural promised land, the paradisiacal haven for those seeking shelter from the world - names like "Angel's Landing" and "Temple of Sinawava" keep the theme of a sacred place demonstrating supernatural beauty. More than one local Indigenous culture revere Zion as that literal sacred place, and any visitor will be able to see why. The canyon was marked as Mukuntaweap National Monument in 1909, and the Zion National Park was established ten years later - all the way back then and well beyond, anyone who saw Zion knew it had something special.

Zion is large, complex and varied in its experiences, but that is to its benefit; there's plenty to do, even over a stretch of multiple days, and there are beautiful sights and experiences for everyone there, from the novice hiker to the professional rock climber. Zion's slots and little rills are a different experience from the likes of Bryce or Grand Canyon, mostly due to the fact that with Zion you start at the *bottom*. When it comes to those canyons, you're viewing them from the top, a high angle that presents the whole canyon at once; by nature, Zion takes you through step by step, curve by curve and canyon by canyon, like some storytelling adventure where you never know what comes next. This method of hiking through also means a little bit of a different weather experience - Zion is cool, humid and temperate due to shade and water sources close to the surface. Don't think this means you don't need sunblock - there are some incredible sun-washed plateaus to hike to as well!

Zion is also somewhat unique, especially in this desert biome, for regular encounters with water. Many of its trails and slots lead up to and through small water ways, crystalline pools and even Zion's famous curtain waterfalls. An ambitious hiker planning to visit Zion would open up multiple new trails and paths by including waterproof boots in their kit.

Zion has a shuttle system in place from the nearby parking areas to get you into the park without having too many cars interrupting the

Zion National Park never disappoints; expect gorgeous views around every corner. Photo by Stacey Cox.

natural serenity. Once you're in, there's more to do than just hiking; Zion also has camping, biking, horseback riding, stargazing and even world class cuisine! There is plenty to do in the canyon, just check NPS media for availability and schedules. Zion also stands in opposition to Bryce and the Grand Canyon in that there is a good portion of the canyon that can be seen from within a car - the route through Zion actually goes *through* Zion, as in you can enter the canyon from one side, drive all the way through and emerge on the other side. Most of the best sights require at least a little walking, but if someone happens to be car-bound for whatever reason, Zion is still a good option.

This guide would be remiss if it didn't mention the wildlife in Zion at least once. Zion is home to some of the most gorgeous and significant fauna southern Utah has to offer. Utah's state bird, the stately Golden Eagle, as well as the symbolically ubiquitous Bald Eagle are both in the park year-round, though more heavily during migration season. Rare-but-resurging Peregrine Falcons also nest in Zion regularly; so regularly, in fact, that some portions of the year are dedicated to Peregrine nesting season, and some of the trails close down to give the federally protected and sensitive birds space. Yes, that means some of the trails are inaccessible during this season, but a good pair of binoculars and a sharp eye may just treat you to a dazzling pair of parental raptors caring for a clutch of chirping babies.

Carved in part by the Virgin River, Zion ranges from around three thousand to around five thousand feet in altitude - average for the area, so if you can breathe easy in Kanab, Orderville, Mt. Carmel in the like, you don't ascend too drastically into Zion. This makes the hikes less demanding, especially for people used to low altitudes. However, there are additional considerations to be made in hiking through a place like Zion; most significantly, the weather. Slot canyons like Zion's can flood *very* quickly - called "flash floods" for a reason - so stay safe by keeping an eye on weather patterns, and listen to local guides and experts on which trials are safest when. As always, plenty of water and hiking rations are a must, and be warned - the canyon walls of Zion are high, dense and complex, meaning cell service is spotty at best. Don't count on your electrical devices for navigation if you can help it - maps are available at various visitor centers in the area, and at Zion's large and accommodating Visitor's Lodge (along with some of the best food around.) There are also a whole host of guides who make their livelihood helping visitors have the best possible experiences in Zion, so if you can find one that suits you, the trip will certainly benefit. Zion is also one of the busier destinations around here, with dramatic increases in visitation in the last few years, so consider visiting in the shoulder months if you can swing it - it'll be a little less crowded in the off season, if a little more chilly!

There aren't many places to look down on Angel's Landing; this spot is one of them. Photo by Weston Daley.

The mesas, cliffs and canyons of Zion are often cited as the highlight of any visit to this area. Many a tourist and visitor will instantly respond "Zion!" when asked what their favorite part has been so far, so odds are it may just be the case for you too. Go check out Zion, and find out for yourself why it's named after a biblical paradise.

BRYCE CANYON BY DAY AND BY NIGHT

By Ty Gant

One of the first things they teach a young journalist is to take the first person "I" out of things, to keep things impersonal, to take a clear view on a subject.

However, if you'll permit, dear reader, some subjects are too personal to cover in so distant a way - and this is my paper and my vacation guide, so I get to take a little bit of liberty on a matter that is very close to my heart!

It is my pleasure to introduce you to the beauty and mystery that is Bryce Canyon. Named for Scottish immigrant Ebenezer Bryce, who settled one of the first ranches in the area in the late 1800s, the canyon was known then for easy access to water and high quality timber - Ebenezer Bryce was a carpenter from old Scotland, and he brought with him many of the old Norse stories for which the Canyon's landmarks would be named ("Thor's Hammer," "Erickson's Beard" and so on). The canyon would be dedicated as a national monument in 1923, and designated as a National Park in 1928

Approaching the upper reaches of the Grand Staircase, Bryce showcases some of the best that southern Utah has to offer, with layers of brilliantly colored sedimentary rock stacked in, among and above gorgeous evergreens, all framed by naturally formed pillars of solitary stone. The spires and hoodoos seem to shift in color as the sun breaks over the cliffs, and the basins and ridges come alive when the sun hits them. It is, in a word, magical.

Bryce is arranged almost like a stadium or theater, with the entry points at high altitudes and looking out over the altitude basins. There are multiple hikes that take you into the canyon floor to get up-close-and-personal with the unique rock formations - evocative names like "Thor's Hammer" and "Rainbow Point" give you an idea of some of the sights you're in for when you visit beautiful Bryce. In addition to the journeys down into the canyon, there are ring trails that hug the high basin ridge, allowing you to see the canyon from every angle, and take in each of the sights and landmarks it has to offer. Bryce is an enchanting place from any angle, so the opportunity to follow the Rim Trail around its entirety is a spectacular one.

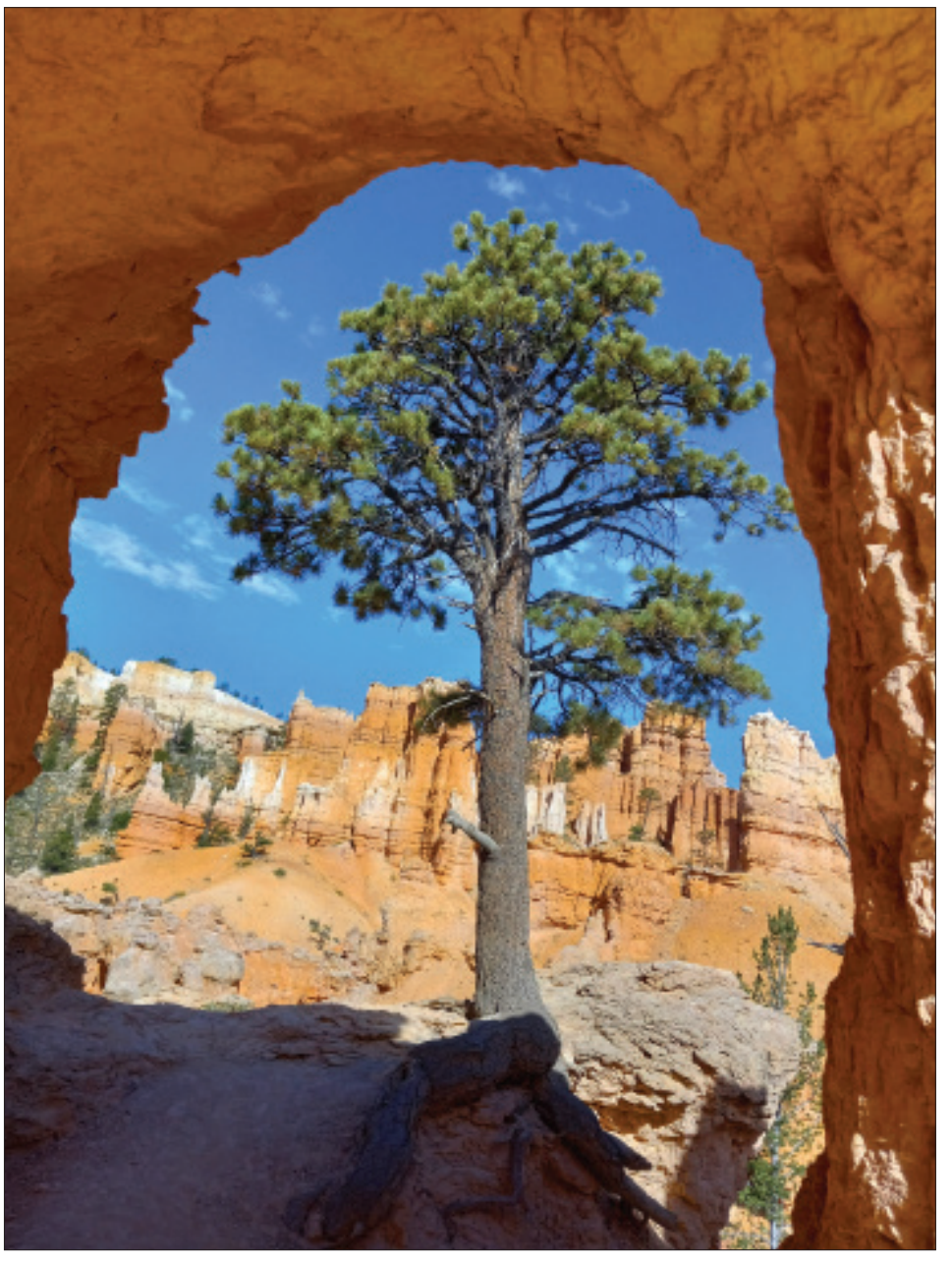
The hikes along the Rim are fairly easy, and most of the hikes into the canyon are at least manageable for the casual hiker. The Rim hikes in particular are forgiving when it comes to distance; there's plenty to see early on so you can turn around if you're exhausted without feeling like you're missing out. There are a few of the trails into the basin that can ask a lot of a hiker, but nothing too extreme. As always, keep the altitude in mind: Bryce, particularly the Rim, ranges high, above 9,000 feet on the southern side. That means rapid dehydration, thin air and cold winds - bring lots of water and plenty of snacks to stay fueled up, and especially if you visit in fall, bundle up!

Now with cold temperatures and cozy blankets in mind, there's a secret to really enjoying Bryce: visit it twice! The colors and landscapes are phenomenal, yes, but they are best seen during the day. Bryce shines as an entirely new experience when you visit it at night. Rural Utah has some of the lowest light pollution levels anywhere in the US. It's very dark here at night, no big cities or structures to fill the sky, and that means something special: stars. Bryce is a high altitude point in a low light pollution area, and there's no place better for stargazing and witnessing the night sky. The park service has moonlight tours and guided stargazing for safe and easy travel along the canyon's rim to the best spots to see the cosmos in a whole new way.

There is limited space to drive along the roads to the Canyon, but the National Park Service (NPS) provides a free shuttle service from a parking lot - there are visitors' centers at the park entrance and in nearby Tropic, and as always, the NPS app has good information and access to services specific to the park. Bryce falls under the National Parks Pass along with Grand Canyon and Zion, so if you pay for access to the one you can access them all. Bryce is significantly more remote than either Grand or Zion, and while that means a little extra travel time, it also means significantly less visitation - brave the journey more casual vacationers won't, and you'll get a much more private and personal experience without any of the crowds.

Speaking of personal experience, I've always had reason to believe in the unique nature of Bryce, if you'll permit me to share. My grandfather Leland Pollock (from whom I take my middle name) was in charge of trails and roads in Bryce for 23 years. My mother was raised in a little home within the park's borders. Despite our ancestry being more English and Polish, the parallels with a little Scottish homestead are not lost on me. Grandpa was a hard-spoken, shrapnel-scarred World War II veteran with a manner so stern his in-laws called him "the General." For such a man to be so taken with a landscape that he made a career out of caring for it, and even raised his family there, it had to be something special! When Grandpa retired in 1983, he finally moved off the park land … to Tropic, Utah, 10 minutes from the entrance to Bryce, where he lived till he breathed his last breath. From someone who knew then, and someone who knows now: Bryce Canyon really is magical!

Even the desert sees snow sometimes. Photo by Judy Kiel.



Bryce is as much a natural amphitheater as it is a canyon - and it's equally beautiful from the bottom and the top. Photo by Rocel Bettencourt.

JOURNEY TO THE STARS WITH KANAB'S STELLAR VISTA OBSERVATORY

By Rich Csenge, President
Stellar Vista Observatory

Traveling through Southern Utah is awe inspiring. In daylight, its monumental land forms capture the imagination. The beauty and grand scale of natural features are startling; high plateaus and bare rock exposed for eons assuming otherworldly shapes. The land is a study in geologic wonders. But then, as night falls over the land, to look up into the sky is to seemingly behold the entire cosmos!

Stars: uncountable stars! On a clear night, the constellations and planets appear to be almost within the grasp of one's hand. The blizzard of glistening lights at first appears to be scattered across the heavens at random. But looking longer, familiar shapes can be traced; the Big Dipper, Cassiopeia, Orion, Scorpius, Sagittarius. After 15 minutes when the human eye adapts fully to the darkness, the night sky in southern Utah is mesmerizing, mysterious, infinite, immortal!

One day a few amateur astronomers residing in Kane County, Utah, got together to develop a visionary goal and to formulate a plan: they would work to create a facility for public enjoyment and appreciation for what people can see in the southern Utah sky at night. From this spark of inspiration, the nonprofit Stellar Vista Observatory emerged in Kanab as a resource in assisting residents and visitors fulfill their desire to experience and appreciate the beauty and complexity of the night sky.

In Kanab, Utah, star parties for public enjoyment of the night sky are scheduled every month, while authoritative weekly sky reports published in area newspapers help direct budding sky watchers to the most interesting and readily observable celestial phenomena throughout the four seasons. The 501c3 Stellar Vista Observatory enjoys strong support for its ongoing efforts to draw attention to and preserve the visibility of Southwest Utah's starry night skies for present and future generations.

In recent years, a movement to preserve natural darkness has been sweeping across the states of the Intermountain West. National and State Parks in Utah, 22 of them in all, worked diligently to meet outdoor lighting criteria to qualify for official designation as Dark Sky Parks from the International Dark Sky Association, the world's foremost body working to preserve and protect the visibility of the sky at night.

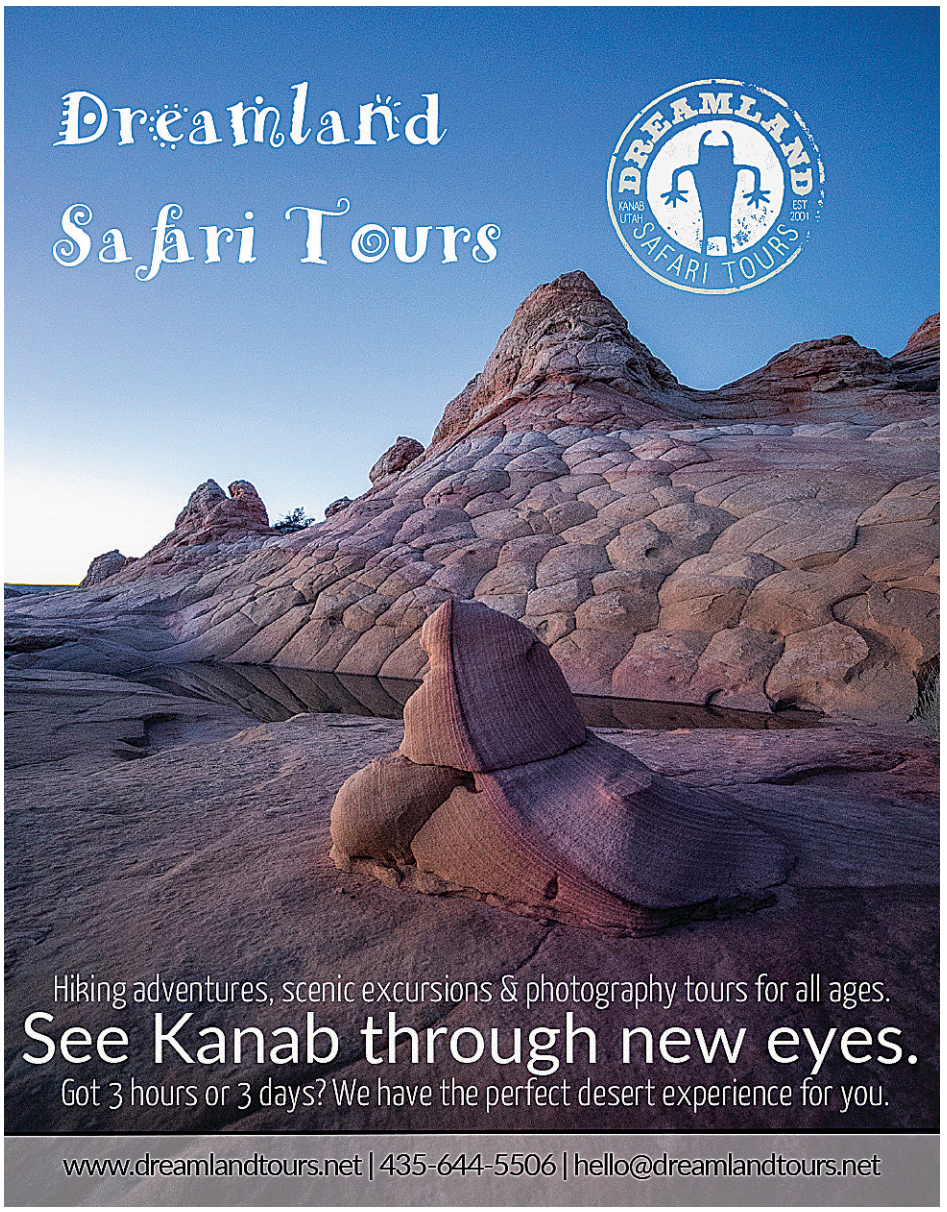
For a list of accredited dark sky parks in Utah, go here: www.visitutah.com/places-to-go/dark-sky-parks. To learn more about efforts to preserve star-filled nights across the four-state Colorado Plateau eco-region, go here: extension.usu.edu/iort/cp-darkskies/.

At the heart of this magical experience is the absolute necessity for reducing and eliminating light pollution, defined as a brightening of the night sky caused by street lights and other man-made sources, which has a disruptive effect on natural cycles and inhibits the observation of stars and planets.

Natural darkness above is protected when municipal, commercial and residential outdoor lighting is shielded, aiming the light we need to see at night down toward the ground, instead of shining sideways and up. This simple act of kindness to our neighbors, to our communities and for wildlife, has become the key focus of a rapidly rising worldwide movement. As well it must if humanity is to save its view of the stars, that ineffable and irreplaceable aspect of our common heritage. Because tragically, 83 percent of people in the United States can no longer see the Milky Way from where they live. Something truly majestic has already been lost, and people are taking notice!

Fortunately, Kanab, Utah, is one of a half-dozen proactive rural communities in the state that have enacted night sky friendly outdoor lighting ordinances to preserve and protect their starry nights. With a complete range of visitor services, the growing community offers astro-tourists extraordinary proximity to federally managed parks, forests, monuments and public lands; all of them outstanding destinations for stargazing.

To learn more about Stellar Vista Observatory's 2023 series of free public star parties, and plans to build an educational astronomical observatory in Kane County, Utah, visit: www.stellarvistaobservatory.org.



Low light and low air pollution means easy viewing of the night sky. Photo by Sunny Stroeer.

YOU'RE MORE THAN INVITED TO BEST FRIENDS

By Michelle Sathe

There is a destination in Southern Utah where 30,000 people make a pilgrimage from all around the world every year. A place where dinosaur tracks and petroglyphs mark its red rock cliffs, where the Lone Ranger and John Wayne once roamed. A place that some people find so special that they make the journey to this destination in the high desert year after year, returning with friends, partners and kids so that they can share an experience often described as "magical."

This place is the home and headquarters of Best Friends Animal Society, which operates the largest animal sanctuary in the United States. Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, located just outside Kanab, Utah, and in close proximity to Zion and Bryce National Parks, cares for about 1,600 animals on any given day and offers free visitor and volunteer experiences at every level.

It's the dogs, cats, horses, bunnies, pigs and more that attract visitors for the first time. But it's the sense of community, the stunning ambiance, and the peaceful energy of the Sanctuary that keep people coming back.

What began as a dream by its co-founders in 1984 to save homeless pets, Best Friends' Sanctuary has grown from endless acres of rustic land formerly used as dinosaur stomping grounds and a backdrop for Western movies into a national organization that's working to end of the killing of dogs and cats in America's shelters.

Visitors can see and experience that work in action, along with a whole host of other things, like socializing puppies, feeding popcorn to pigs, bottle feeding kittens and taking a dog out on a hike. Lodging options include staying on-site in one of several cabins and cottages that offer views of horse pastures and starry skies, or at the Best Friends Roadhouse & Mercantile in downtown Kanab.

Designed as the most pet-centric hotel in the country, the Roadhouse extends the Sanctuary experience by offering guests sleepovers of Sanctuary animals and special features for guests' own pets. Every stay benefits the lifesaving work of Best Friends Animal Society.

At the Roadhouse, pets aren't just welcome in the rooms, they're expected to enjoy all the available activities with their owners, such as time in the play yards, a summer splash zone, the mercantile store and hanging out during live music and movie events happening throughout the year. Rooms come with built-in trundle pet beds, lots of pet treat, and a delicious vegan continental breakfast for humans.

Ready to experience this magic for yourself? To find out more about Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, visit bestfriends.org/sanctuary. To book a room at the Best Friends Roadhouse & Mercantile, visit bestfriendsroadhouse.org or call (435) 644-3400.

Right: Visitors can see and experience that work in action, along with a whole host of other things, like socializing puppies, feeding popcorn to pigs, bottle feeding kittens and taking a dog out on a hike. Photo by Best Friends Animal Socity staff.

Every adventure can be made better with a furry friend. Photo by Sunny Stroeer.

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GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT

By David Hercher
Bureau of Land Management

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument spans across nearly 1.87 million acres of America's public lands in southern Utah. From its spectacular Grand Staircase of cliffs and terraces, across the rugged Kaiparowits Plateau to the wonders of the Escalante River Canyons, the Monument is a diverse geologic treasure speckled with monoliths, slot canyons, natural bridges and arches. Due to its remote location and rugged landscape, the monument was one of the last places in the continental United States to be mapped.

The Monument is also an outstanding biological resource, spanning five life-zones - from low-lying desert to coniferous forest. Deep within this vast and austere landscape, the Anasazi and Fremont cultures made contact in the period AD 950-1100, leaving behind rock art panels, occupation sites, campsites and granaries.

Stepping further back in time, fossil excavations have yielded more information about ecosystem change at the end of the dinosaur era than any other place in the world. The Monument's size, resources and remote character provide extraordinary opportunities for geologists, paleontologists, archeologists, historians and biologists in scientific research, education and exploration. This unspoiled natural area remains a frontier with countless opportunities for quiet recreation and solitude.

On September 18, 2021, the Monument celebrated its 25th anniversary as the first national monument managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Today, the Monument continues to evolve as a place of cultural, paleontological, ecological and geographic discovery, as managers work to retain traditional resource values, while preserving important monument objects of value for the benefit of generations.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument is becoming a very popular outdoor recreation location. Visitation to the monument dramatically increased during the pandemic, when Americans headed outdoors and rediscovered BLM-managed public lands, not only in southern Utah, but throughout the west. The number of visitors has doubled in the last 20 years and today, more than 1.4 million people come to enjoy the beauty of the monument. Before visiting Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, ensure you are prepared with the most up-to-date information about the area by calling or stopping one of the monument visitor centers.

A hint of winter hides from the sun on the GSENM. Photo by Harry Barber.

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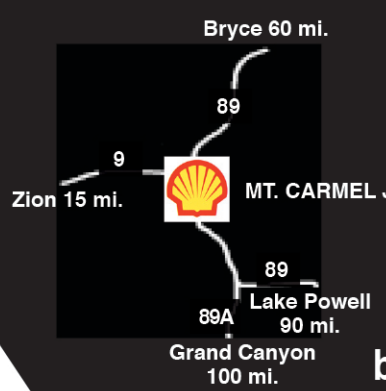

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A THOUSAND FEET OF U.S. HISTORY: THE MAIL DROP

By Ty Gant

The Mail Drop cliff is a pretty vantage point, great for taking photos and quite a fun hike to both the top and the bottom. Many locals have hiked the Mail Drop, and just as many of them are genuinely surprised to hear why it is called "the Mail Drop."

This area of Utah saw a huge colonization boom in the late 1800s, as the Latter-day Saint population started moving in - naturally, that meant services like roads, amenities and communication started increasing in demand as well. The U.S. government back then would subsidize private contractors who could most efficiently run mail - see the Pony Express for a commonly known example - and one such contractor landed the important role of getting mail from local settlements to the more populous St. George to the west. The Mail Drop, called by a host of different names then, was the spot where some dangerous and steep trails converged - despite the risk, it was a fast place to take a horse up or down the cliffs. It was exhausting and dangerous, but efficient.

The name "Mail Drop" came about when the couriers had just about enough of the tiring and risky trip up and down the cliffs, and they decided to let gravity and a bit of mechanical ingenuity do the job for them. They estimated the cliff to be about 1,000 feet tall - we know it's closer to 700 thanks to modern measurement technology, but they weren't far off - so they drove stakes into the sturdy stone along the wall, ran some ropes and pulleys and created a system of rope lifts that could hoist the mail up and down the cliff. One courier would show up at the top, another at the bottom, and they'd exchange parcels - for bags full of letters that wouldn't be harmed by the impact, the upper courier could literally just drop the mail off the edge. "Mail Drop" as a name is pretty literal!

The Drop can demonstrate its own history fairly well too; they say that if you pay close attention during a hike, you can still find some of the names of the couriers carved into the walls of the Drop. Give the Mail Drop a visit and see if you can find them yourself!

This sheer cliff is more than it seems. Photo by Sam LeFevre.

RANCHING IS THE LIFE-BLOOD OF KANE COUNTY AND THE ARIZONA STRIP

By John and Dusty Reese

Farming and ranching have always been an important part of Kane County. Early members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints began settling Kane County in the 1860s. They farmed the bottom lands near streams and creeks where irrigation systems could be developed; they began grazing livestock on the high plateaus during the summer and found the desert to the south to be excellent winter range; and as they began settling communities, the small towns prospered because residents established orchards, field crops and livestock grazing operations. Kane County has maintained many of these customs and culture throughout its history.

Ranching and farming operations are still a priority and a large part of the local economy. Life for the early settlers was never easy; water was scarce and access difficult. The early residents worked hard to establish their livelihood, and today's residents work hard to maintain it. Farmers and ranchers are the backbone of America, working from sun-up to sundown, taking care of the land and livestock and providing food for fellow citizens and the rest of the world. Kane County is home to more than 180 active farming and ranching families. While they are an integral part of providing locally grown food in our area and playing their part in feeding the world, they also support other local businesses, whether it be other agricultural supported businesses, fuel distributors, tire and vehicle repair shops or building and maintenance suppliers. The rancher's economic impact is often unrealized until it is gone.

More than 85% of the land in Kane County is managed under the control of the federal government; multiple use has always been a very important part of its management. Farmers and ranchers are the caretakers of the land, ensuring adequate feed and water are available for livestock and wildlife. They love their cattle and the land, and they can use your help. Fences are very important for rangeland health and animal safety. Please never cut fences and always take the time to close gates, even if you plan on coming back through – trust us ranchers, we always have the same thought and we always get in trouble for it. When you are looking for that perfect place to camp, please do not park or camp within 150 feet of a water trough or block access to corrals. Wildlife and some cows won't come to drink if people are there. If you are using recreational vehicles, please stick to the roads. Grass is a rare commodity here and once torn out by tires, it can take years to come back.

We hope you enjoy your time here in Kane County and learn to appreciate the ranching lifestyle as we do. While here, check out a farmers' market for local produce or buy some local beef. While out enjoying the beautiful scenery, please remember that there are still families here that are working with the land to bring food to your table.

Raising alfalfa and other crops is a huge part of many family's ranching operations in Kane County. Photo by James Holland.

Photo by John and Dusty Reese.

Many ranches in the area are still owned and operated by the same families that settled them before the turn of the 20th century. Photo by Carson Robinson.

Photo by Lacy Button.

Calving season is a busy time for ranchers. Photo by John and Dusty Reese.

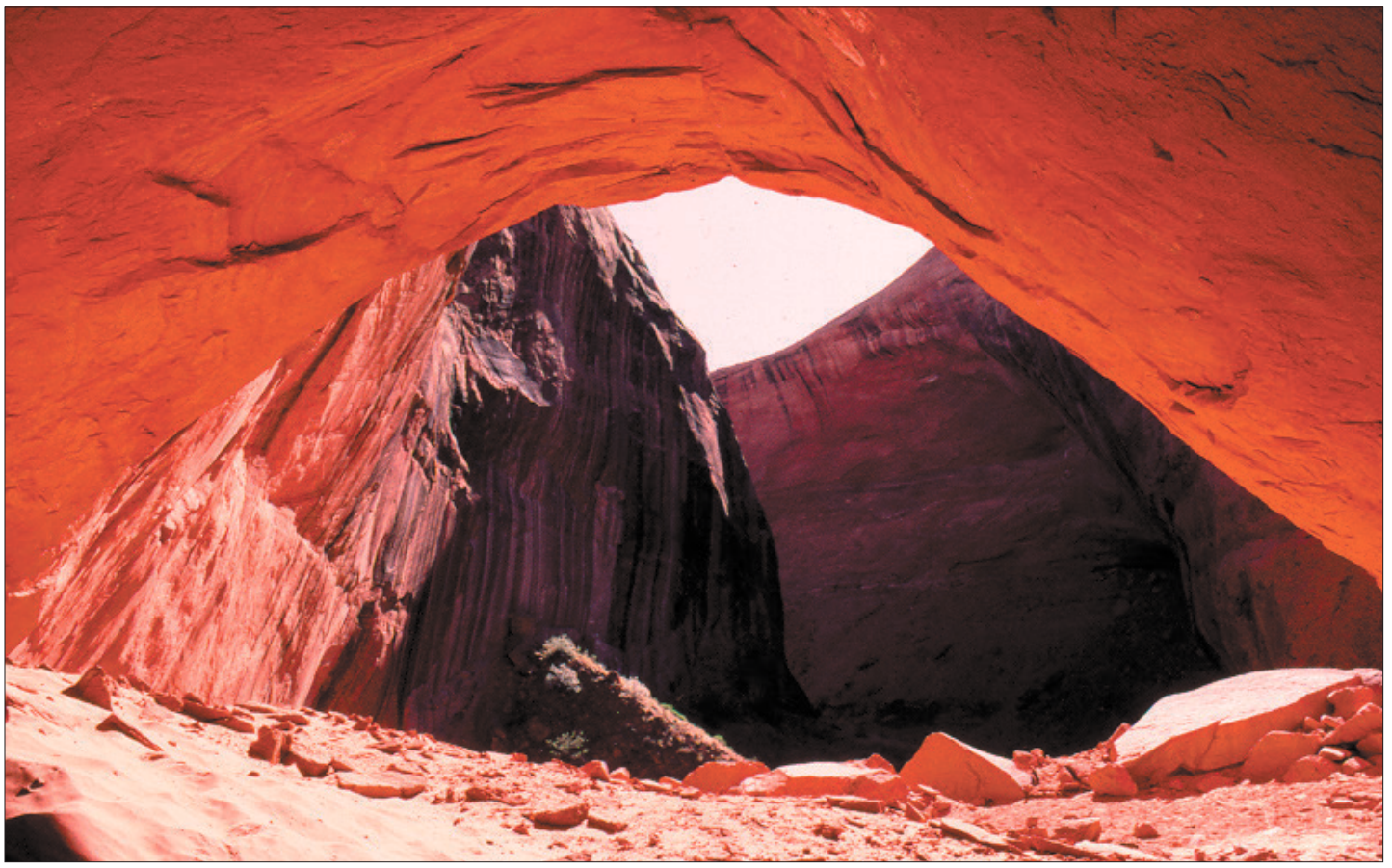
Photo by Lacy Button.

Photo by Lacy Button.

Roping an animal is a crucial part of taking care of livestock to keep them and the ranchers safe during doctoring and handling. Photo by Lacy Button.

Many local ranchers raise hay crops for their own livestock and then sell the extra to other operations all around the country. Photo by Lacy Button.

A HIKE THROUGH COYOTE GULCH



The bridge of Coyote Gulch is a wonderful frame for a majestic photograph setting. Photo by Phil Clark.

By Phil Clark

I called my brother, Martin, one day in 1990, and told him that I had heard of a great backpacking trip to do and asked if he was interested. He hadn't yet been to the Page area and we had backpacked many times before. I told him about the majestic canyons of red sandstone, cottonwood trees that are pale green in the spring and the wildflowers, springs and rock formations along Coyote Gulch. It didn't take much convincing.

Martin and his childhood friend, Carl, drove from Albuquerque one weekend to meet in Page. Even though they were not new to backpacking, neither Martin nor Carl had been backpacking in canyon country. We were all looking forward to the exploration of a new place.

I had explored some of the other canyons in the Escalante drainage before and had been using the only available guidebook at the time, Hiking the Escalante by Rudi Lambrechtse, 1985 edition, to help us explore. This, of course, was way before the internet, geotagging, instagram and all the ways that nowadays the entire planet knows about these beautiful and fragile places. The guidebook has the following in the publisher's note: "There are many conflicting opinions on how to write a wilderness guide. Some say that there should be no guides or even maps. 'Let the hikers wander and enjoy the adventure of finding their own way and discovering the beauties for themselves.'" On the other end of the spectrum are those who "would want every step and corner described." My preference is the former.

We hung out at my duplex for the evening and had dinner and talked while we got last minute gear ready for the trip. It was so good to see both of them again.

We left early the next morning to make the drive out to Coyote Gulch. Cottonwood Wash Road was dry and open so I showed them part of what I considered my 'back yard'. We did a quick jaunt into Cottonwood Wash Narrows to stretch our legs and I told them that canyons are what really gets me going. Some canyons are so narrow one cannot fit sideways.

We drove on to Escalante and visited my friend, Bill, at his house. We worked together at Glen Canyon NRA at the time. He was the seasonal Ranger for the Escalante Subdistrict and practically knew the area by memory. Bill and I had hiked before but couldn't join us this time. I introduced him to my brother and his friend. We talked about places to camp and get water in the canyon. There is always the stream in Coyote Gulch, he said but there were also some springs that he'd drank from for years without incident. Water is always the crucial element in a backpacking trip and spring water sounded a lot better than creek water. He did say to treat when in doubt. Coyote Gulch, he said, was a flowing creek about two miles from the trailhead and would continue to have water all the way to "The Reservoir" as referred to Lake Powell. Back then, the lake came quite a bit up the canyon since it was within 25 feet of "full pool". We thanked him for the advice and recommendations. I wished he could have gone with us. To this day he is still a nimble canyoneer.

We followed the guidebook directions to the trailhead. There were few signs then. The guidebook instructions were to use the "road log for the exact mileage. The signed trailhead appears shortly after a stock corral on the left". The guidebook's mileage log started at the start of Hole in the Rock road. We zeroed out the trip odometer as we turned off of the state highway. The book said the trailhead was 34.7 miles away, with a notation that "the road becomes quite curvy for the next two miles". Sometimes the guide would note a difference in the color of the road as it had been cut from native rock and dirt.

While we were not just wandering in the desert exploring new things, it was good that the book left many things for the reader to discover. We drove down the road until the end, a sandy area that required four wheel drive. Eager to start exploring, we checked that we left with enough water to make it to camp. My brother and I used to hike and backpack often. We had fun and saw some great things together. I was glad he could do this trip.

The first mile had little resemblance to a canyon and was more of a walk across the sand and brush. Luckily it was mostly flat since sand makes for hard hiking. It wasn't that long until we started meeting the creek, which seemed to surface from the ground and start flowing through the sand. A couple of bends further, and we meet the Glen Canyon NRA boundary. Felt kind of funny to about to be recreating where I worked. We passed through a wood and wire "hiker's maze" and continued to follow the canyon.

Downstream the walls got taller and the canyon became narrower. We started to see seeps of water coming out of seams in the rock walls of the canyon. The seams are a weak layer in the sandstone and water can find its way through. The seeps provide water for a variety of plants. Often maidenhair fern arc out above the drops or streams of water coming out of the rock, forming a hanging garden. That day we saw a scarlet penstemmon, the blooms of which make me think of shooting stars. As we sat down to change into sandals, we heard some frogs croaking. Not long afterwards, we saw Jacob Hamblin Arch, also known as Lobo Arch. The guidebook says Lobo Arch was named for the last of the grey wolves that used to inhabit in the Escalante region.

We found our first camp in a deep alcove, above the drainage. It is so deep that we didn't bother putting up tents as the cliff across from us was framed in the arch-like alcove. It might have been a good idea to have put up the tents because that night there was a constant wind that swirled in the alcove. I suppose we should have known, since wind helps form alcoves. Hoping to continue to hear the frogs, we didn't hear much out of the local wildlife that night. Perhaps they don't like wind either.

Groggy with poor sleep, we woke up to a sky with some wispy, non-threatening clouds, framed by the canyon walls. The wind had stopped. The birds greeted the morning sun. The indirect light on the canyon walls gave it depth and intrigue. We had a wide view of the creek below and no one else was in sight. No other human sounds at all. Until... we heard a very loud roar approach and seemingly follow the Coyote Gulch from the air. An F-16 flew above the canyon some 500 feet above the ground. Once, flying across the park for work, I saw a B52 flying so low below that it looked like a small plane from our altitude. Back then, perhaps the military thought that the odds are good that there would be no one there and flying so low wouldn't bother anyone. We held our ears closed. The jet was very low to the ground and we could see it as it zoomed upstream towards the Kaiparowitz Plateau.

The wind made a casualty of my stove in the morning. The blown sand made its way inside the plunger assembly. The sand broke the O-ring seal and wouldn't pump up the white gas tank. We managed to get breakfast going with my brother's stove as he had a French butane stove that used cartridges instead of white gas.

We hiked down the canyon a little further and were greeted by a huge arch in the river. Coyote Bridge spans the canyon, having been formed by the creek itself. That's the difference between an arch and a natural bridge. A natural bridge has a watercourse flowing under it. An arch is formed by wind and freeze/thaw cycles and not by flowing water. We walked by the bridge, looking relatively insignificant to the impressive formation. The greenery of an early spring cottonwood contrasts against the red rock of the bridge.

Sanitation back then wasn't much of an issue. There were so few people that human waste decomposed easily. At some locations in the canyon, there were simple pits covered by a simple wood seat, in a private setting. One thing about being in a canyon, the views from latrines sometimes are beautiful. Nowadays, backpackers in Coyote Gulch are expected to haul out their own waste.

Soon, we see Stevens (Skyline) Arch above us, towering above the canyon, deep red against the blue sky. Hiking in southern Utah, a person learns about the different geologic layers. Each layer is a different type of stone, some smoother and more easily eroded, others more solid, making ledges and 'shelves'. Downstream of the bridge we find a small spring coming out between the softer reddish Navajo sandstone and purplish, denser Kayenta layer. It was sweetish water, dripping out of the moss covered shelf. Topping off our water supply, we continued downstream. Soon, we found a series of Kayenta layers to descend, much like a natural staircase. As we arrived to a large flat area, we looked back to see a waterfall falling over the purple shelves.

The canyon starts winding back and forth into the Kayenta. It seemed difficult to keep track of direction inside the canyon, but then, it doesn't seem to matter since the only route is down the canyon. Often when there was a 90 or 180 degree turn in the creek, the outer wall would be hollowed out by historic flash floods. Passing another series of stone 'stairs' and waterfall, we couldn't help but stick our heads under the water and splash our feet. By then it was getting hot and the water felt so good!

We picked out a campsite nearby and set our packs down. We would set up camp after we continued down the canyon until we could see, or get close to, Lake Powell. Soon we saw the tell-tale 'bathtub ring' of the reservoir, showing that we had entered below 'full pool'. Edward Abbey called this part of a canyon the 'dead zone' where not much actually lives. The closer we got to the lake, the muddier it got. We decided it was far enough and headed back to set up camp and have some food. Our meal consisted of a long-time backpacking meal, from a four decades old Sierra Club cookbook. Alpine Spaghetti is made with dry spaghetti and a dry version of pesto with dried basil, garlic and chopped nuts, reconstituted with olive oil in the cooked spaghetti. As we ate spagetti in the wilderness we were serenaded by frogs, toads, crickets, cicadas and other creatures make music to the gentle gurgles of the creek.

My brother and his friend were amazed by the beauty of the trip. We knew that in the morning we would be hiking back out the way we came. The views would be different going back. Often things are even more interesting that way. Until then, we talked until we were too tired to talk anymore and bid each other good night. A sliver of the Milky Way passed over us as we slept.

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TOP FIVE HIKING TRAILS IN KANAB

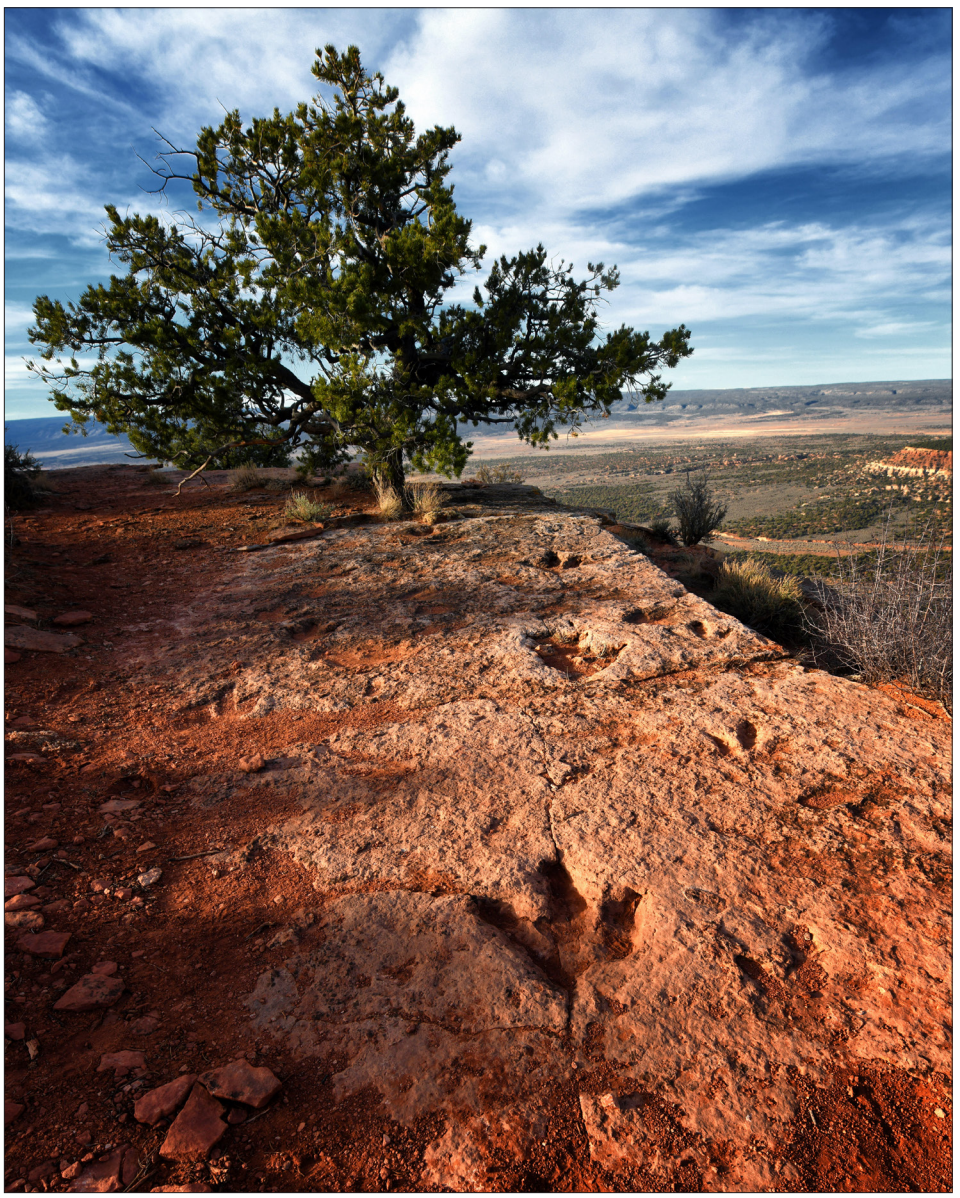
By Harry Barber

There are many trail opportunities to choose from on public lands in the Kanab area. Depending on what it is you want to do, I suggest you drop by a Kane County or Bureau of Land Management Visitor Center and talk to a knowledgeable employee about your desired trail use. I like to use the trails as a way to get into an area, and then push on to explore even further. A word of caution – do not do something you are not comfortable with. Mother nature can be fickle out here in the desert, so it is important that you know your limitations, be prepared and travel with a friend if feasible. At the very least, make sure somebody knows where you are going and when you expect to be back. These trails are incredible, but can also become dangerous, so take precautions to ensure you have a great hike!

Personally, my vice is mountain biking, hiking and trail running – so my focus here will be on five trails that I frequent.

Bunting Trail- (Hike/Run) Are you looking for steep? You found it! Located west of The Ranchos subdivision, the trail starts off as a rolling trail following the wash bottom. The trail can be used to access a cool set of dinosaur tracks. Beyond the junction of the Bunting Trail with the wash that accesses the dinosaur track site, the Bunting Trail begins a steep upward ascent. As you continue climbing right through the rim of the mesa, an amazing view awaits your arrival. The trail, particularly the last quarter mile, contains a lot of loose rock. The rock, combined with the steep nature of the trail, makes this a challenging climb. You will gain about 1,200 feet in elevation. From the trailhead to the rim and back again will give you about 3.2 miles of calories burned. And although this does not seem like a lot, what you lack in miles you will make up for in painful elevation gains!

Greenhalgh Trail- (Hike/Run/Horse) This trail is located in Trail Canyon, north of town just off Highway 89. The trail can be accessed by parking at the ATV bridge that spans Kanab Creek and walking to the trailhead from there. Named after the Greenhalgh brothers, Harry and Wilford, the trail is moderately steep and offers great views of the surrounding area. A few years ago, the BLM worked with the American Conservation Experience (ACE) to make trail improvements for a safer user experience.



Walk where they once walked. These dinosaur tracks atop Flag Point offer a chance to take a step back in history, literally. Photo by Harry Barber.

This pile of old cars was used for rip-rap against the highway. Photo by Jill Williams.

Mansard Trail- (Hike/Run) In the last several years, the BLM has made improvements to the trail using the ACE crews. The trail is also used as part of the G2G Ultra Marathon race and will get your heart pounding as you make your way up through the switchbacks on your way to the rim, where once again – amazing views await your arrival. This trail will lead you to an alcove containing an incredible petroglyph panel. Please be respectful of the panel by not touching or walking on it. From the trailhead to the panel and back again will be about five to six miles.

Cottonwood Trail- (Hike/Run/Horse) The trail is mostly rolling with some moderately steep grades. The trail generally follows the base of the Vermilion Cliffs west of town. There are some great views of the Arizona Strip to the south. You will be under the rim of the Bunting Mesa with opportunities on occasion to spot desert bighorn sheep. The trail offers a challenge if you take it all the way to Cottonwood Canyon, as you will be putting nearly 10 miles on your kicks before you return to where you started.

Catstair Canyon- (Hike) Catstair is the family-friendly trail. This is one of my go-to trails when the grandkids visit. The trail offers an opportunity to hike a narrow canyon bordering on being a slot canyon. The hike to the pile of old cars used for rip-rap against the highway is fairly short but offers plenty for kids to see. The hike from the trailhead to the old cars and back is about one mile.

D.O.N.'T. D.I.E.

By Katie Wallace
Preventive Search and Rescue Specialist, Kane County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue

Welcome to Kane County, Utah! We've got 4,109 square miles of some of the world's most beautiful landscapes. It's a wonderland for folks who love the outdoors. However, our terrain is remote, rugged and, at times, harsh. Each year, our Sheriff's Office and our volunteer Search and Rescue team respond to many incidents. Sadly, they're sometimes fatalities. We hope you and your loved ones have a wonderful – and SAFE – time while visiting. So, without further ado, D.O.N.'T. D.I.E.!

D rink water. It's dry down here! Probably drier than your home. Plan on drinking three liters per day in the winter and up to six liters per day in the summer when temperatures get into triple digits. Dehydration is often the first poor choice in a cascade of decisions that lead to safety incidents. If you're not used to drinking so much water, consider buying something yummy that will make you want to drink more, such as an electrolyte powder or juice.

O rient yourself to the place you are in. Many of our landmarks look similar to one another. Take maps for the area. Map apps on your phone, such as Gaia and Avenza, are great, but also remember that batteries can die and screens can crack. As you travel, whether by car, atv, horseback, snowmobile or on foot, make sure you look behind you as you go and note landmarks out loud for the whole group so you can remember where you've been.

N osh early and often. Drinking lots of water is important, but it can mess up your electrolyte balance and make your situation worse if you don't have food on board. Electrolyte drinks are great, but make sure that you eat real food, too. In the summer, it will allow you to absorb that water correctly. In the winter, calories mean internal heat. Always bring more food than you think you need; if you get into a situation that delays you, like a mechanical issue or an injury, you'll be grateful that you don't add a blood sugar crash onto your list of problems.

T ell someone your plan. Tell them where you going, who you're going with and when you'll be back. Give

Kane County Search & Rescue team in front of a helicopter used for saving lost, injured or incapable hikers. Photo courtesy of Katie Wallace.

them a time to call for emergency support if they haven't heard from you.

D ress in layers. The desert is a temperamental beast. You can be boiling in the daytime, then freezing once the sun drops behind the ridgeline. Start with a lightweight shirt, then progressively thicker, warmer layers. An emergency poncho, thin pair of gloves and a warm hat weigh almost nothing and can really change a situation from life-threatening to tolerable. You might be used to "Sun's out; guns out!", but many of our landscapes are treeless and the sun can feel punishing. Consider covering your skin with long pants, sleeves and a sun hat to maximize comfort.

I nternally reflect. Know your limitations and those of your party. Don't be afraid to change the plan partway through, based on emerging needs. So many of our rescues are due to an individual overexerting themselves or overestimating their abilities. Going out is optional; coming home is mandatory.

E ducate yourself on current conditions. The vast majority of our county roads are dirt - or after any precipitation, mud. With beautiful clay soil, many of these roads become impassable in wet conditions, even for four-wheel-drive vehicles. Furthermore, conditions are changing all the time. Just because you've been there before doesn't mean it will be the same – we have rockfall, flash floods, heat waves, cold snaps and any other variety of things that could change the landscape from last month's All Trails report or your visit to the same place a year ago.

Have fun out there! And **DON'T DIE.**

Kane County rescue squad near Kodachrome Basin. Photo by Katie Wallace.

SAR team members after a particularly muddy rescue in Paria Canyon. Photo by Katie Wallace.

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THE HISTORY OF LONG VALLEY

Amidst the beauty of these southern Utah canyons, you'll discover charm in the small, rural communities of Long Valley. The communities north of Kanab have existed through the years mainly due to the vision, devotion and hard work of generations of people who settled the area, raised their families, and built lasting communities.

The history of southern Utah is filled with historic accounts of pioneers who braved hostile conditions to establish new settlements. The towns of Long Valley were founded in the mid-1800s by Mormon settlers, dedicated to building united and self-sufficient communities. Through their ingenuity and commitment, they laid a strong foundation for the rural way of life, which is still proudly celebrated today.

Agriculture has been a mainstay to this area's survival and independence. Ranches and family farms spread out along the valley and into the canyons, and backyards are filled with gardens and fruit trees, many planted by early settlers.

Glendale's Annual Apple Festival, held each fall, celebrates the harvest and honors the pioneers who planted the first orchards. Picking an apple from a tree planted so long ago, is truly holding history in the palm of your hand.

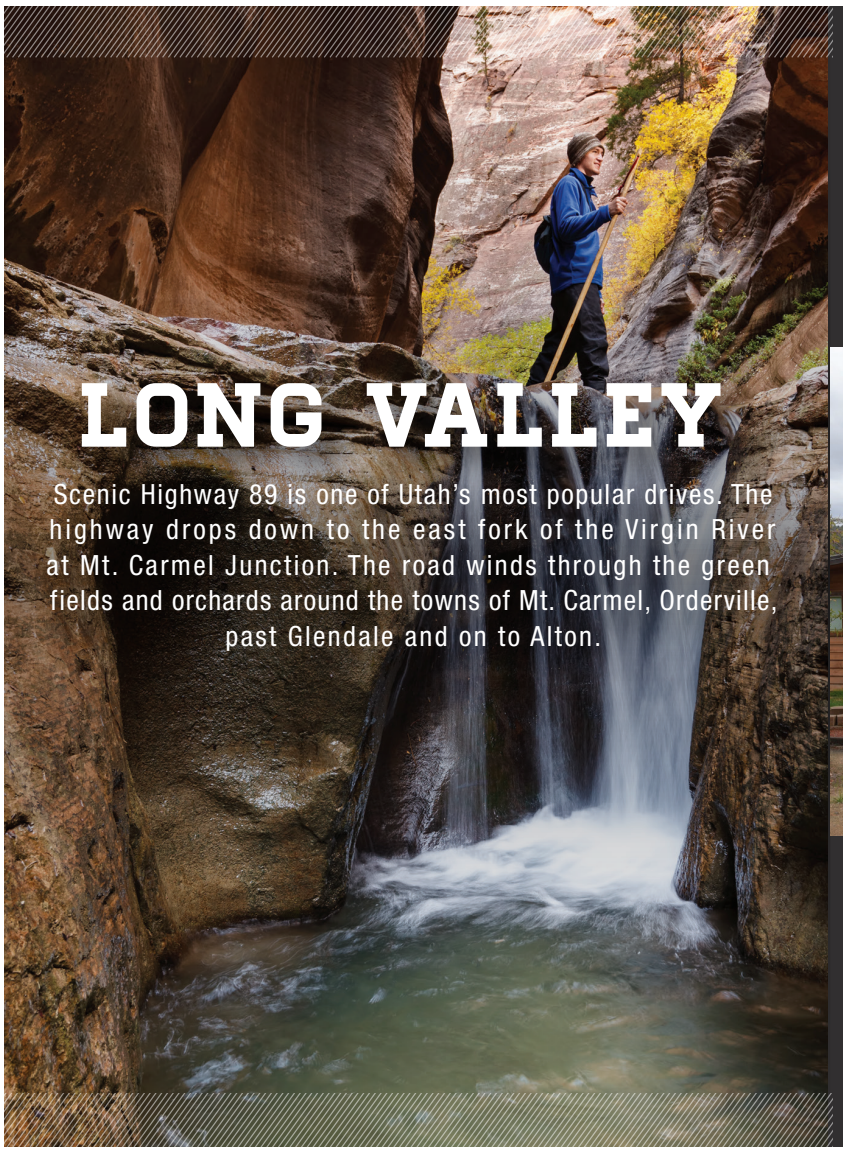
For the pioneers, sharing their knowledge, tools, skills and the foods that they grew helped the community survive. That spirit of community remains strong. Knowledge and new ideas are shared in workshops that cover a range of topics from sustainable farming to grazing management.

Long Valley's strong agricultural base is always evident, but never more so than during the Kane County Fair in August. Old-time fun and games, exhibits of fruits and vegetables, arts and crafts, great entertainment, and livestock and small animals raised by community youth in 4H and FFA, offer a glimpse at a wonderful way of life and a rich agricultural heritage.

Rural America offers a peaceful enchantment rarely found in today's world. With history, beautiful surroundings, friendly people and amazing food to share, rural America is alive and well in Long Valley!

Stop and visit – residents want to share their favorite hikes, best fishing spots and stories of their next of kin!

The Virgin River flowing through Orderville in the fall. Photo by Barry Glazier.



LONG VALLEY

Scenic Highway 89 is one of Utah's most popular drives. The highway drops down to the east fork of the Virgin River at Mt. Carmel Junction. The road winds through the green fields and orchards around the towns of Mt. Carmel, Orderville, past Glendale and on to Alton.

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STOP, LOOK, BREATHE, SEE - BEING ON CANYON TIME

By Cyrus Mejía

On my first visit to the Grand Canyon, I had an interesting experience. After driving for about an hour to get to the park, then another 25 minutes to one of the overlooks, we were looking at one of the most beautiful and dramatic places on earth! While taking in this spectacular view we noticed how some visitors would just drive up, jump out of their cars, look around, pose for selfies, jump back in their cars and take off. Never slowing down enough to experience "Canyon Time".

While you're visiting Kanab I'd like to invite you to stop, look, take a breath and see. You'll be amazed how much there is to see and do in this magical little town.

One of the places that could be missed by folks just driving through Kanab on their way to "someplace else" is Raven's Heart Gallery. Yes, there is an art gallery in Kanab! It's right in the center of town, across from the LDS church, between Duke's clothing store and Aiken's Lodge. If you caught the green light driving through Kanab, you might well have missed it. (Which is why I'm lobbying for the traffic light to be replaced with a four-way stop sign!)

Raven's Heart Gallery exhibits a collection of art comparable to galleries in Santa Fe, Scottsdale or Park City. We represent both established and emerging artists - and most of our artists live right here in Southern Utah! It makes perfect sense that artists would be drawn to this place of spectacular beauty.

I first arrived in Kanab in 1984 along with a bunch of animal loving friends to start what would become Best Friends Animal Society, which is now a national animal welfare organization working to end the killing of dogs and cats in U.S. shelters by the year 2025! Gary Kalpakoff, gallery co-owner, migrated to Kanab from Santa Barbara in the late 70s after attending photography school, so we're both fully steeped in this red rock atmosphere! In 2015 Gary and I realized we shared a dream, to open an art gallery in Kanab. Raven's Heart Gallery is the fulfillment of that dream. We started out showing my paintings and Gary's photographs along with some of our artist friend's works. Now the gallery has expanded to represent 23 talented artists. The gallery features paintings, photography, printmaking, ceramics, glass art and sculpture, as well as a large collection of beautiful hand-crafted jewelry. Every year we put on an

Raven's Heart Gallery Team. Left to right: Gary Kalpakoff co-owner, Colleen Tomlin gallery manager, Cyrus Mejía co-owner, Ellie Mae Clough gallery assistant.

extravaganza of a fall show, when all of our artists present their new works. Raven's Heart Gallery Fall Show is a celebration and THE PARTY-NOT-TO-MISS in Kanab. Our 2023 Fall Show will be on September 29, so if you're in town come on down and join the fun! But the fun and games aren't just happening in the fall. "First Fridays" are a time of celebration too! The first Friday of each month Raven's Heart Gallery puts on a fiesta with presentations, art demonstrations and talks from our artists. It's usually a full house so if you're in town on a "First Friday" be sure and get there early!

Being on "Canyon Time" is taking the time to stop, look, take a breath and see the beauty all around us. And in truth, isn't that what art is all about? While you're in Kanab, by all means, go get the T-shirt that says "I hiked the Grand Canyon," and "I volunteered at Best Friends." But also, stop by Raven's Heart Gallery and let us help you find a piece of art that will become a part of your life. And each time you see it, your spirit will fly back here to "Canyon Time."

A Day in the Museum. Willamarie Huelskamp. Acrylic and collage on canvas. 72" x 36"

Grandfather Coyote. Cyrus Mejía. Oil on canvas. 36" x 48"

Friends. Gary Kalpakoff. Photograph Metal Print. 36" x 24"

Beneath the Horizon. Carol Bold. Oil on canvas. 48" x 36"

WHEN YOU GET OUTSIDE, YOU ARE HEALED INSIDE

By Tiffany Unsworth

Jim Spielman grew up in Buffalo, New York, always surrounded by the sounds of street cars and city life. He had never experienced the feeling of being completely immersed in nature. Not, that is, until he came to Kanab. We had the opportunity to guide Jim and his wife Joan to many beautiful areas, but one spot stands out.

Cory Unsworth, co-owner of Kanab Tour Company, took Jim and Joan to a remote peak where nothing man-made could be seen. The opportunity to sit in an off-road vehicle and climb mountains was a thrilling prospect to them. Jim suffers from peripheral neuropathy, a condition that requires him to use a cane or walker, and he simply can't get out on the trails on foot. Therefore, he couldn't stop smiling as they ascended the red cliffs.

Cory stopped the vehicle, and the group sat in silence for a few moments.

"What is this?" Jim asked, referring to the stillness that was all around them. "I've never experienced anything like this before." From the time he was a little boy, he couldn't remember being surrounded by natural silence and peace. He had never gone up a mountain before because he physically couldn't. Never breathed in the clear, fresh air that can only be found in places remote.

And something happened to Jim in that moment. He was refreshed. He was renewed. His disability didn't go away, but inside, he experienced a healing change. And we felt grateful, so grateful, to witness that change.

That experience, and many more of a similar nature, have reaffirmed to us the power that is found in this beautiful place. Guiding people to beautiful places is more than a business for us. It is a life mission. We strongly feel, because we have seen it a myriad of times, that getting outside changes people. It blesses relationships. It helps visitors clear their heads. It often causes us to rethink our purpose and direction. And, let's face it, it is really fun.

Why would a guest to this area consider a guided experience?

• We can keep you safe. Our off-road vehicles and driving experience allow visitors to enjoy the scenery and not the mechanics of getting from here to there.

• We have knowledge of the area. You can maximize your precious vacation time by hiring someone who can teach you along the way and make sure you hit all of the highlights!

• We help you make memories. We are here to ensure that you take home treasured experiences and photographs of a time when you felt like you were on top of the world. And, considering our current world conditions, we could all use memories like that.

Whether you choose Kanab Tour Company or one of the many other wonderful guiding outfits in the area, you will find the secrets nature has held for us all along.

Snowy north Peekaboo shrouded in clouds. Photo by Jerry Melrose.

KANAB'S OASIS, JACKSON FLAT RESERVOIR

By Ty Gant

Any summertime vacation to our beautiful, but arid region of the world is naturally going to get hot and dry before long. What is a visitor to do when the desert reasserts itself and the trip starts to feel like a vacation into the heart of an oven? There are a few ways to cool off, and one of the foremost is a visit to the shimmering Jackson Flat Reservoir. An artificial lake only minutes away from Kanab, the cool relief of a dip in the lake is improved by the contrast with the iron red cliffs surrounding it. The reservoir is ringed by the Sherry Belle Trial, allowing running, biking and skating on the lake's edge, and more than one location where it leads directly to the lake if you're in a triathlon mood.

The Kane County Water Conservancy District (KCWCD) that governs the reservoir has invested time and money into making Jackson Flat more than just a big water tank. The reservoir is now home to a world class calisthenics course - the shorter installations of the course even double as monkey bars and a climbing cage for the kids, all positioned on soft sand leading to the sand volleyball court. Anyone looking to get their morning exercise is bound to have a good time getting their pull ups cooled by the breeze of the lake and gazing at the Kanab sunrise. The course has hosted multiple professional fitness competitions, including the aforementioned world-class calisthenics tournament that helped sponsor the facility's construction in the first place!

The reservoir also serves an important recreational and environmental role as a spawning pool for trout and bass. Any anglers visiting can try their hand at fishing the lake, and the KCWCD host, "The Reel Deal" fishing competition, giving anglers two days to see who can catch the heaviest fish. Record breaking fish have been reeled in at that competition, and there are cash prizes and kids' competitions as well - the competition for who can bring in the smallest fish is typically just as heated as who can bring in the biggest. One fisher at the 2022 Reel Deal tournament once said "Honestly? The bass population in this reservoir is one of Utah's best kept secrets. You can wrangle some impressive stuff out of here … and they're just getting bigger as they spawn and the water district brings in more and better food."

Jackson Flat Reservoir has activities for the whole family. The KCWCD disc golf course is a state of the art popular course in southern Utah. Photo by Kelly Brown.

Whether you walk on two legs or four, there really is something for everyone at Jackson Flat Reservoir. Photo by Cody Brunner.

You don't need to be a fisherman to enjoy taking a boat out on the water! Photo by Harry Barber.

If you're looking to actually get on the lake, you can rent a paddleboard, kayak or pedalboat and enjoy drifting on the lazy ripples while the lake cools you off. Kanab hosts multiple events over the year that allow for more ready community boating and kayaking, including some events where the rentals are free for a time - keep an eye on the community schedule for those sorts of things, but of course you're welcome to bring your own kayak's and do the launching yourself.

The reservoir is equipped with an outdoor pavilion for shade, as well as rest stop facilities, so it's the perfect place to set up a picnic and enjoy the scenery. The Water Conservancy district keeps the place clean and well maintained, including the green grass that grows readily thanks to access to the water. It may sound silly, but when you've been walking the dry Sand Dunes, a nice lawn next to a big lake can be a godsend! A nice picnic in the shady pavilion while the kids play in the grass is a perfect lunchtime respite from the sun during the heat of the day.

If you're looking to get a little competitive while you're there, the reservoir hosts a full 18-hole disc golf course with plenty of fun water hazards to give you a chance to cool off! Frisbees fly phenomenally over the breezy terrain in the area, and the water puts an interesting spin on the game as the shifting evaporation patterns play with the disc's course. Naturally, this means if a shot goes a little wide, the frisbee's going to get wet - and you probably will too as you go in after it, but most of the time that's a plus not a minus.

The reservoir's location leads to it being a popular holiday spot, as Thanksgiving day charity runs, Utah's founding day fireworks and music festival showcases are set up regularly. It also happens to be a prime stargazing location, far away from the lights of the town and with plenty of open space to set up telescopes and binocular tripods. The local astronomy organization, Stellar Vista Observatory, often holds stargazing parties out at the reservoir - and even if they are not hosting their own event at a convenient time, they have telescopes and other stargazing equipment to rent out for any independent stargazing parties. Other enthusiast groups like birdwatchers, casual musicians, distance runners and art groups often make use of the quiet, open space outside of the bustle of the town.

In all, Jackson Flat Reservoir makes a perfect compromise between accessibility and recreation. It's just outside of Kanab, it's got gorgeous scenery and plenty to do, and it has the oh-so-necessary ability to help keep you cool in the hot months when many folks do their vacationing. Slot it on any day of your trip around lunchtime, and you won't regret it.

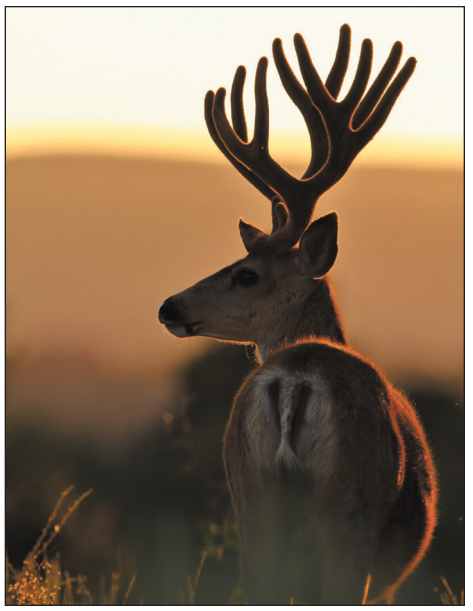
EXPERIENCE SOUTHERN UTAH ...

By Jeremy Houston

While " Roaming" around and guiding ATV tours for the many folks that come to visit Kanab, I am often asked about the wildlife here. People want to know what kind of animals are native to the area. As a wildlife photographer, this question is easy to answer. They are often amazed at the diversity of species the area holds. Because I am partial to mule deer, I like to steer the conversation toward a picture of a large buck or two, and in some cases I can show them the exact spot where the picture was taken.

It doesn't matter what time of year it is, there is always something to photograph. With the creation of the Jackson Flat reservoir, wintertime has become fun. I don't have to go far to find plenty of feathered friends. Eagles, Canadian geese, great blue herons and many species of ducks fill the reservoir with what seems like an unending supply of photograph worthy subjects. Early spring is a good time to find one of the cutest things you'll ever see, a newborn desert bighorn sheep. They can be found in multiple areas, perhaps the best place to see them is the eastern side of Zion National Park. Spring and summer are a great time to find several big game animals such as mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope and the occasional black bear. I'll never forget a remarkable day of seeing all of the before mentioned animals near Tropic Reservoir. Late summer is the time for mule deer bucks with velvet covered antlers and rutting desert bighorn rams. September and October is for elk. The sound of a bull elk bugle is simply magical! November and December is for the mule deer rut, and hopefully we get some good snowfall to make for serene winter pictures. The southern Utah landscape provides dramatic and vibrant colors lending to depth and beauty unique to the area.

The following photos by Jermey Houston are within a 40-mile radius of Kanab:



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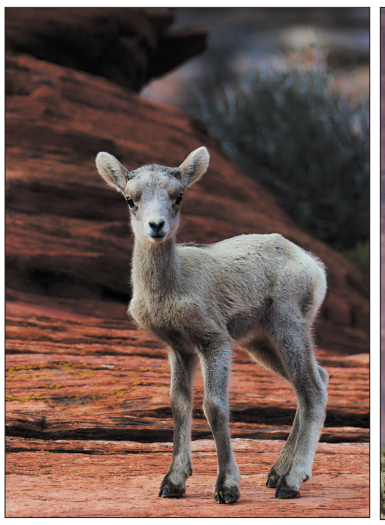

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Google Review

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Zillow Review

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DESERT ETIQUETTE

By Phil Clark

The Colorado Plateau, including Southern Utah and northern Arizona, has been "discovered." People from the world over are coming for the spectacular natural beauty. While the high desert of the Colorado Plateau might seem to be tough as rock, strong and resilient, often it is actually extremely fragile. When the natural beauty is damaged, it's damaged forever - since it takes so long to recover, if it recovers at all.

"Leave No Trace" principles and "The Hiker's Code" on Utah.com offers guidance to people who might not be sure what to do in the wilds of the high desert. If in doubt, people should ask themselves "would it be OK for someone else to do this in my living room, in my yard or on my house?"

While hiking a trail or driving on a road it is important to stay on that trail or road. Often there are no 'trails' but rather routes, especially in canyons. The sandy surface of the desert is often populated by organisms that create an extremely fragile darker colored crust that is actually alive and takes a really long time to grow, called "cryptobiotic soil". It is amazingly fragile and should be avoided by following drainages and walking on solid surfaces instead. When on a trail or in a canyon with other people, remember that downhill hikers yield to uphill. And if there isn't already a road, it's illegal to create a new one.

With more visitors, comes more human waste and litter. Many places have no restrooms and more often land managers require visitors to pack all waste out, including human waste, using "wag bags." If you need to "go" in the desert, don't leave the paper behind. The white "flowers" last a long time and won't decompose in this dry climate. Experienced hikers bring a plastic re-sealable bag to store trash and other waste for later disposal. Public lands employees have enough to do without having to pick up after everyone else. It there's not a proper waste receptacle, don't leave it behind.

Many people like to have a campfire. While a fire is fun and romantic, usually it is only really a necessity if it is cold. Southern Utah and northern Arizona are blessed with some of the darkest skies on the planet. Consider not building a fire and gazing at the night sky and the Milky Way. Cooking is easier on a propane camping or backpacking stove. Consider using a fire pan or an existing fire ring, since the fragile landscape can be forever marred by fire.

In many places, including The Wave and Coyote Buttes areas, there are delicate stone fins sticking out between softer layers of sandstone. Even though made of stone, fins are very fragile and delicate. It is best to take plenty of pictures and don't touch the fins, since even just touching them can cause them to collapse. Some surfaces are too steep to climb, and it's illegal to use cleats, microspikes or other traction devices on the formations, even in the snow and ice.

With the higher visitation seems to be an increase in incidents of graffiti. Most people know that it's not OK to scratch initials or other markings on the rock, but some still have the urge to do it. It's illegal, especially if the scratching is done at an ancient native American or other historic inscription. The ancients' work does not need to be 'improved' by scratching the markings up to make them more visible. There is never a reason to shoot them with a gun, either.

Other visitors seem to think it's fun to slap their muddy hands or draw designs on the walls with mud. "The next flash flood will wash them away," they might say. Actually, for the last two decades the American Southwest has mostly been in a drought and flooding hasn't happened as often. The muddy prints last a long time.

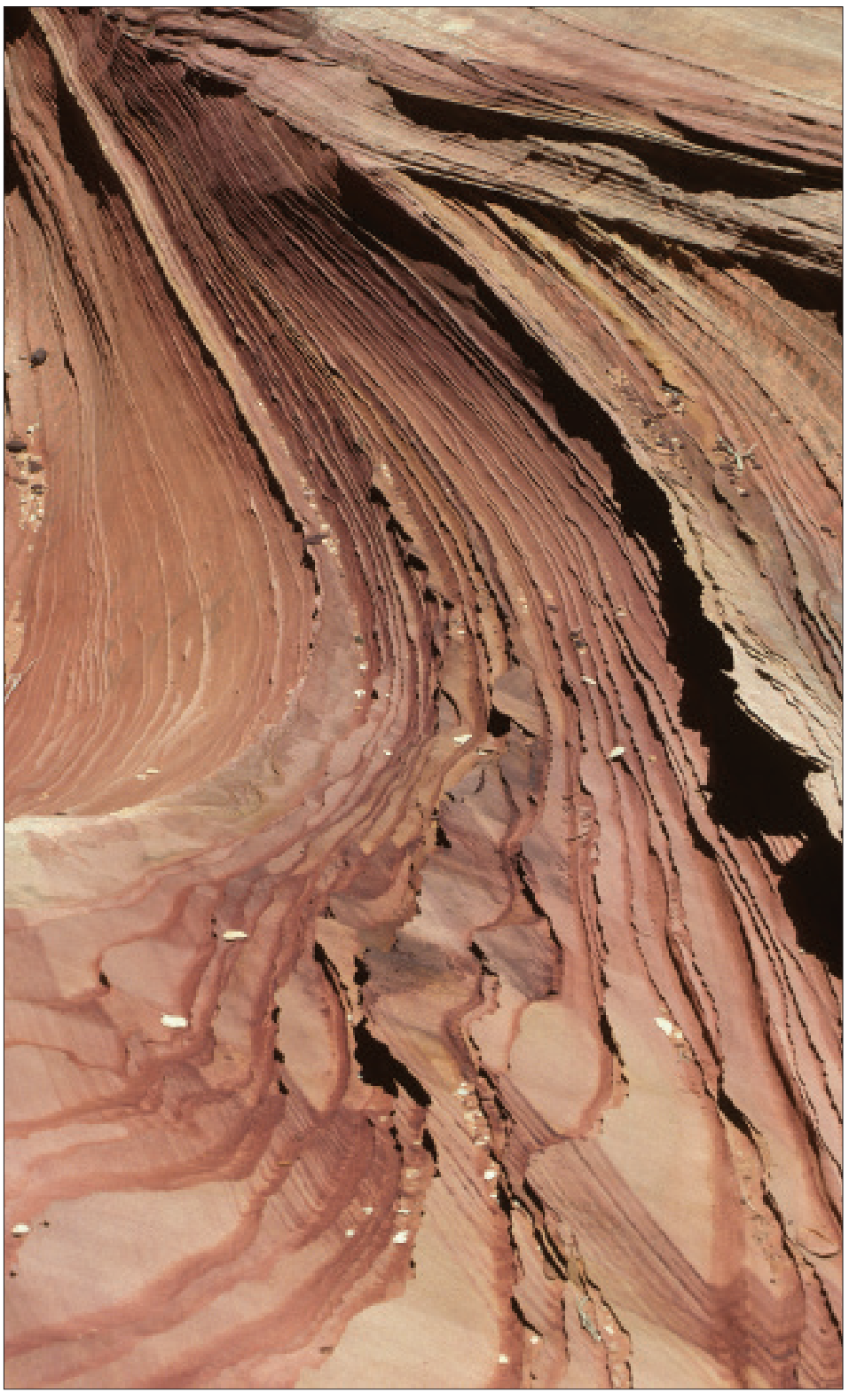
Some visitors stack rocks. Rock stacks for the purpose of marking a trail are called cairns. Cairns are used to help navigate a route by placing them in visible locations, at a distance. A hiker moves from one towards another. Stacking rocks for any other reason does not improve the beauty of the landscape and is an unwelcome intrusion. Stacking rocks in a canyon where there is only one obvious path, down the canyon, is unnecessary. Why not spend the time taking pictures?

Picking wildflowers, while fun and romantic to do, isn't a good idea either. With so many more people visiting southern Utah, if each one of those folks picked a flower, or two, there would soon be few left for others to appreciate and even fewer seeds for another year. Some years produce few flowers at all since some plants require perfect conditions to germinate and grow.

There are many interesting rocks in the desert. Different colors, different shapes. Consider taking a photo instead of a souvenir that will probably end up gathering dust or be forgotten entirely. Remember that it is better to do without that memento so others will enjoy it another time. Why not leave it alone and let others enjoy it?

These are just a few examples of how to respect the beauty of the Colorado Plateau. For many, southern Utah and northern Arizona are "God's Country;" a sort of natural cathedral. Public land management agencies have suffered years of budget and staff cuts. There simply are not enough rangers available to prevent damage to public lands and it's not cool to try to get away with damaging activities. If we all do our part to respect the land and even report violations to the authorities, we can rest assured that our children and their children will be able to enjoy our public lands undisturbed for a long time.

The basic principles of the "Hiker's Code", "Leave no trace" and "Take nothing but pictures" guide those in doing the right thing for "God's Country". Please remember, before doing what might seem to be a fun or 'normal' activity, ask if it would be OK for someone to do that to your house, your yard or your living room? For more information, visit: lnt.org/why/7-principles.



Sandstone fins are very fragile. Admire at a distance and take photos instead of touching. Photo by Phil Clark.

LONE ROCK IS NOT-SO-LONELY ANYMORE

A group of hikers headed to Lone Rock after parking on the beach. The water levels at Lake Powell have drastically changed the landscape. Photo by Phil Clark.

By Phil Clark

The last time I went around the rock monolith known as Lone Rock was in a kayak. This time it was on foot, with a group of friends, some of whom I'd kayaked with. What a difference a few months makes! Lone Rock is not alone these days.

It had been something I wanted to do for some time, since I'd never known Lone Rock without water around it. I wanted to walk all the way around the butte, if for no other reason than to be able to say that I did.

We drove as far down the dunes of Lone Rock Beach as we could and hiked from there, making a bee-line to the rock. We had heard that the ground was muddy and others who had tried to hike there ended up in knee-deep mud, but not today.

On the north side it was mostly dry and relatively solid, so we made our way around the north side. On the south side of Lone Rock we could still see mud flats, with expanses of standing water, so we avoided those areas for now, keeping to higher ground. There were some soft areas, but they were easily avoided. We used our hiking sticks to test the ground if we weren't sure how solid it was. Some places were somewhat solid at first, but if we moved our feet much, it would get soft and sticky. Best to just keep moving. Certainly not suitable for a vehicle.

Wahweap Creek was flowing clear and shallow through the mud and silt. Walls of silt collapsed as the creek undermined the walls. On the other side of the creek was the base of Lone Rock. We looked for a way across and after some looking, found a make-shift bridge of driftwood that others had built. It looked precarious, but it was more solid than it first appeared.

Once across the creek, we made our way to the base of Lone Rock and found it amusing to touch the rock while standing on land, for the first time. It was surreal. None of us had known Lone Rock as a monolith without water around it. It had always been an island.

We continued hiking around the rock, finding some boulder covered slopes and slickrock to traverse. At first we were in shadows and it was cold. Soon we were bathed in sunlight again. We found a boulder where someone had scrawled "Lone Rock" and couldn't help ourselves from taking a group shot.

As the water that filled Lake Powell recedes, it exposes things that others lost: a mask and snorkel lay face down in the mud; a cable sticking out of the dried mud, connected to a small anchor, that got away from its boat; a hundred feet or so of thick steel cable half buried in the sand long ago abandoned. I thought of what stories might be attached to these objects. I thought of how much more litters the ground as the water recedes.

On the way, the patterns in the silty mud kept drawing attention. It was as if nature itself was making art. Sometimes there was a clump of pinon pine cones, coming from far away to accent the geometric patterns. Even the pattern of driftwood and other flotsam was intricately laid down as if by an artist larger than any of us. My mind wandered to a kayaking outing where we floated our way up a side canyon with the kayak cutting through a layer of driftwood on the surface. Now I was standing on that driftwood.

As we rounded to the south side, it was easier to keep out of the mud flats. There were boulders scattered from rockfalls of time past and slickrock to provide solid ground. We had gained some elevation now and could see even better what lay to the south. Below us was one of the 'lagoons' of trapped water in a mud flat. Great for reflection photos and a nightmare to cross. Beyond, we could still see the edge of the water level in the reservoir. Lone Rock beach was almost deserted.

We continued circumnavigating Lone Rock. Before we knew it, we were all the way around and ready to head back to our vehicles. We couldn't have had a better day. Highs in the 40s with no wind in January. On our way back, some speculated and wondered if we'd ever see Lone Rock as an island again. No one knows for sure. What we knew though, was that we had a fun, relatively easy hike and did something none of us had ever done before.

Phil Clark hikes up and touches Lone Rock for the first time.

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NAVAJO NATIONAL MONUMENT

By Phil Clark

Preserving three sets of ruins near Shonto, Arizona, Navajo National Monument was created on March 20, 1909, over 110 years ago by Theodore Roosevelt - three years after he established the Antiquities Act. Betatakin ruin is the easiest for a visitor to see. The Monument is about an hour and a half drive from Page, two and a half hours from Kanab, and is about halfway between Tuba City and Kayenta. A paved road from US 160 leads to the visitor center, two campgrounds and a parking lots.

The staff was very friendly and helpful as my wife and I talked about our past experiences at the monument and how things had not changed much in 30 years. We watched a couple of informative video presentations on the park and the native cultures in the auditorium before checking out the bookstore, maps, exhibits and nearby native American jewelry and crafts store.

There are three self-guided trails to choose from: the Sandal Trail is about a mile, round-trip, from the visitor center and is the only trail to offer views of ruins; the Aspen Trail nature trail leads to a forest view and is 0.8 mi round-trip; and Canyon View Trail, follows the canyon rim for about 0.8 mi, to a historic ranger station. We chose the Sandal Trail which followed the canyon rim on a paved trail to a splendid view of Betatakin Ruin, across the canyon. We had been on that trail in 1990 and it wasn't paved back then, relying more on cairns and paint to mark the route. Betatakin means "House Built on a Ledge" in Navajo and, in Hopi, it's called Talastima or "Place of the Corn Tassel." After years of building, Betatakin had about 120 rooms and was abandoned by the end of the thirteenth century. Today 80 rooms and one kiva remain from the original 120 rooms due to rock fall damage. Built in a huge alcove, over 450 feet high and 375 feet wide, archeologists estimate that it would have held a maximum population of 125 people.

The Monument offers free ranger-guided tours of Betatakin Ruin as the only way to get to the ruins themselves. The Navajo Nation follows Daylight Savings Time and is at the same time as Utah. Arizona never changes time and is an hour earlier most of the year. Visitors should contact the park a day in advance to make sure the Betatakin tour will take place and is first-come, first-served. The tour route descends into the valley from the visitor center on the rim to the valley floor.

Further from the visitor center, Keet Seel can be reached by hiking a distance of about nine miles, one way. Larger than Betatakin, Keet Seel means, "broken pottery scattered around" in Navajo and is a well-preserved cliff dwelling built by the Ancestral Puebloan people. Once a thriving community that expanded quickly in the mid 1200s, construction halted in AD1286 and was abandoned by AD1306. Archeologists estimate that as many as 150 people called Keet Seel home. The dry climate preserved the dwellings and artifacts and visitors are forbidden to remove anything. Many archeological experts consider Keet Seel to be one of the best-preserved larger ruins in the Southwest.

Visitors should contact the visitor center by phone or in person and reserve a permit to hike or camp at the campground across the canyon from the ruins. The trail is sandy and goes in and out of drainages that normally are dry. Be sure to obey the signage warning against hiking in certain areas due to quicksand and flash flood hazards. Ranger guided tours of the ruins are offered between mid-May and early September. The hike is considered moderate to difficult due to large elevation changes and hiking in steep, soft sand. Be sure to practice "Leave No Trace" hiking and camping.

An easy day trip from Page or Kanab, the park immerses the visitor in Navajo culture and a way of life that Ancestral Puebloans experienced some 700 years ago. One of the campgrounds is more developed than the other. Both have restrooms and Sunset View Campground has potable water. None of the campgrounds have RV hookups or dump sites. The nearest hotels are in Page or Kayenta, Arizona.

Be sure to watch the presentation in the visitor center auditorium. Children are encouraged to participate in the Junior Ranger program at Navajo National Monument and other national monuments, parks, recreation areas and public lands. Information about Navajo National Monument is available at www.nps.gov/nava.

Keet Seel ruin was a small "city" in a remote canyon. About nine miles away, it can be visited by backpacking and obtaining a permit from the Visitor Center.

Betatakin Ruins lie not far from the Visitor Center where a ranger leads guided tours. Inquire at the Visitor Center for days and times. Photos by Phil Clark.

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